

If you are like most of the people who have written letters to us, it is apparent that there are some very basic features of the tax proposals now before the Legislature that have not been made clear to you. In my opinion, much of the misunderstanding can be cleared up with just a little more effort on the part of all concerned.

That is why I am here talking to you tonight. I do not intend to try to "sell" you something you don't want. I do intend to tell you, as directly as I can, exactly what these proposals are all about and why they are needed. If, in the next 30 minutes, you come to understand the tax program better, the entire State will benefit. I will try to be as fair as I can, but I would be derelict in my duty if I were not candid in telling you what I believe are good and bad recommendations in the field of taxation.

Wednesday it became apparent that the Lee amendment to the Hughes-Agnew plan was going to be receiving most of the support in the General Assembly. Now, I don't think the Lee amendment really changes the Hughes-Agnew proposals greatly. It only makes one minute alteration in the percentage of taxation. It does put a harder burden on the lower income groups. But I support the administration's tax proposal as amended, not because I think it is the best tax program for all the people of Maryland, but because I think it is a reasonable compromise and is the best program that can be enacted.

Can there be such a thing as a good tax? Of course there can, and here you see some of the ways tax money is utilized in our everyday living. All of us pay literally pennies for many vital services, such as police and fire protection, schools, and roads that would cost us thousands of dollars if we had to pay for them individually or even as private groups. This pooling of tax monies to provide for common needs saves us untold amounts of individual expense that would be required to duplicate these services. All of us agree that the initial reaction to the word "taxes" is unpleasant, but we must consider the greater benefit that is derived in the long run. It's like undergoing a painful medical treatment in order to be better protected from disease, or like depriving ourselves of luxuries in order to pay for the education of our children. We must meet our obligations now if these children are to fulfill the promise of tomorrow.

Public taxation has been resented since the time of the Chinese dynasties. It's the "medicine going down," and we're never going to be crazy about the idea. And if you think I'm any different, let me