

Agencies in as economical and efficient manner as possible. We are, of course, mindful of the fact that changes are bound to occur in the world at large, with resulting repercussions in our own State. I shall see to it, therefore, that all of the administrative agencies of the State Government are keenly alive and sensitive to the problems which may arise in the next two years, so that we will be able to meet the problems as presented in the manner which will insure to the utmost the freedom, protection and the opportunity for pursuit of happiness of our people.

The budget now has been almost completed, because I want to give you all the time possible for consideration of the financial program suggested, in the hope that prompt consideration and disposal of the budget fiscal bill will help to avoid some of the rush which has developed near the end of previous sessions, and permit you more fully to consider and discuss all matters that may come before you.

STATE ROADS COMMISSION

The people of our State regard the administration of the State Roads Commission as second in importance to no other department. And rightly so. When we assumed office, the rehabilitation of the Roads Commission and general improvement in its practices were absolutely required.

What seemed plainly needed was a chairman with engineering experience and executive ability. I found him in Major Ezra B. Whitman, an engineer of national reputation and with admittedly high qualifications. Under his administration, and that of his colleagues, P. Watson Webb of Dorchester County and W. Frank Thomas of Carroll County, the whole system of road building in Maryland has been revised and put on an orderly basis.

The Ritchie Highway, begun under the last administration of the late Albert C. Ritchie, and continued during Governor Nice's administration, was completed in the first year of the present administration; the new Susquehanna River Bridge has been completed and is in service; the splendid new bridge across the Potomac River near Morganstown, Charles County, linking Maryland and Virginia, has been opened to traffic in the past month; the Hancock Bridge was completed and placed in service, as has the Shepherdstown Bridge, since your last adjournment; the Sinepuxent Bay Bridge at Ocean City is now under construction; the costal highway from Ocean City to the Delaware line, providing an additional entrance into Ocean City, has also been finished; and extensive work on the Philadelphia Road, extending from Havre de Grace to Elkton, has been done. The Solomons Island roadway, in the neighborhood of Lusby, 5 miles, is under construction and will be completed in the Spring of 1941; the Easton-Trappe road, which will replace the old narrow, crooked roadway, is rapidly nearing completion, as is the section of Route 40, just east of Hancock in Washington County.

These are only a portion of the accomplishments toward the improvement of our roads system. Your cooperation with the present administration resulted in the stoppage of diversion of gasoline tax funds. Not one dollar has been diverted, and none will be diverted. We can go ahead on an even more ambitious roads program, one that is wider in scope than ever has been undertaken by the State. Plans are under consideration for a much-needed road of