

When we attempt to characterize and appraise Governor Ritchie's qualities and service, paradoxical as it may seem, we find it easy and yet difficult to do. That is to say, it is not easy to particularize in assessing and summing up the contribution made by a public man.

Governor Ritchie's public life, it seems to me, was predominantly characterized by superiority of character, clear-headedness, a sense of responsibility, and extraordinary industry in the performance of the tasks which came to his hand. I realize that in so enumerating the qualities which to my mind give distinction and explain his career, I am using general terms, such as are too frequently used in describing the qualifications of public men of much smaller caliber.

When, however, the word "character" is used in its fullest and superior sense, no description can convey a higher tribute to a public servant, either living or dead. It is in that best sense of the word that I venture the thought that the chief contribution made by Governor Ritchie to the people of Maryland, was the high character, as a man, which he brought to their service.

Fortunate as he was in birth, background, cultural and intellectual attainments, he brought to the administration of the affairs of our people standards of high-mindedness, integrity,—and in a word, gentility, which soon caused him to be recognized and accepted as a symbol of our best traditions.

Gifted with an intellect of the very first order, thoroughly educated, intensely industrious and level-headed, he had already achieved a marked place as a lawyer, and civic student before he came to the position of Attorney General of the State.

When elected Governor, he succeeded an era in our public life during which many of the standards had been lowered, and many of the methods had come to lag, and to be all too lax. House-cleaning was decidedly in order, re-organization was a crying need which had been talked about for years, with practically nothing done. Governor Ritchie gave instant recognition to the defects of administrative condition. By suggestion and leadership, he brought about remedial legislation, and proceeded to put the affairs of the State upon a business-like, intelligible and workable basis.

At the same time, by day-to-day high-minded action and industrious inquiry, he almost at the very beginning re-established better rules of public conduct. In a word, he raised the standards of public life in Maryland by force of his character and example as the chief servant of his State. He not only caused his name, but the name of our Commonwealth to be more favorably known. The people promptly came to realize that in him, superior character, integrity, appreciation of and faithfulness to public trust, found exemplification. From thence on, they rallied to his support, and enthusiastically followed his leadership—with the result that as the years went by, he was honored by the people of his State to a degree without parallel—and Maryland, under his leadership, assumed a position of challenging importance in the eyes of the Nation.

Through his advocacy of the doctrine of States' Rights, but more important, through the breadth of knowledge and understanding of our form of government and the essential requisites of Democratic institutions, Governor Ritchie became well and favorably known throughout the United States. Persons visiting all parts of this country had the experience of learning that people