

I could go on, but the general picture is just about the same in every area of activity.

In viewing these conditions and trends, we are justified, I think, in being optimistic in our forecast of State revenues for this year and perhaps next year. But we are not wizards and soothsayers, and I think it best that we continue to temper our optimism with caution.

We all hope that the economic progress will continue unhindered, but there is nothing in all of our experience to assure us that we may not at some future time suffer declines and setbacks.

The actions we took here last winter to provide sound financial support of State programs and State institutions have been so widely misconstrued and misinterpreted that I think it might be well for us to review the occurrences as we undertake today to reshape a part of our plan.

You will recall that in my message to you of last February 5, I said that the time had come for Maryland to upgrade its standards of public education to the point that every Maryland boy and every Maryland girl can be assured of an opportunity to receive the best education this country has to offer.

That was the main objective that we sought during that session, but I am afraid a great many people lost sight of that main objective in all the clamor and confusion that arose over the plan we suggested to finance the program.

But certainly we who planned it and executed it have never forgotten that we tried to, and actually did, develop a program which has given Maryland a public school system which I believe to be second to none in the entire country.

Already other states are looking with considerable interest upon this plan with the idea of possibly adopting it.

Outstanding educators of the State hailed the legislation as the greatest advance Maryland has made in public education in forty years. The Maryland State Teachers Association, in its official publication, said that as a result of your action here at the 1964 regular session, you deserved to be called "the education Legislature."

This is a proud accomplishment, and one for which you will be remembered long after the controversy surrounding the financing of the program has subsided.

But let us get back to the sequence of events. In my message, I said it had been the consistent policy of this Administration that any new program that the State adopts involving the expenditure of additional money contain the necessary measures to finance it.

Now, it was estimated that the new program of State aid to Baltimore City and the counties to help them improve their educational system would cost the State an additional \$16,200,000 in its first year of operation.

You will recall that I proposed that \$6,000,000 of this be financed from the revenue deficiency fund. According to the estimate of revenues, provided me by the Board of Revenue Estimates on December 19, 1963, this left a remaining \$10,200,000 to be financed, presumably by tax revision, to operate the program for the first year.