

The Governor of Maryland addressed the Joint Session :

FAREWELL ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR SPIRO T. AGNEW

Maryland General Assembly

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I do not put much stock in goodbyes. Old Governors, unlike old soldiers, cannot be relied upon to conveniently fade away.

Although this is my farewell as Governor of Maryland, I suspect we will meet again, many times I hope, to work together for a State and nation calling urgently for every doer to do his job.

Still, there is a sadness in leaving old friends . . . and old political adversaries too . . . for we have been mostly of one spirit, if not always of one mind; and the judgment of our days together will not easily distinguish between those who said "Aye" and those who said "Nay." In the record we are one.

These past two years have not been easy for any of us, and we have made it all the more difficult by foregoing the path of least resistance to build a trail for the future to follow. In pressing our case for change, we have defied the taboos and anachronisms of generations, dared the unpopular view for what we held to be the popular good, stood fast in the name of justice and stood firm for the sake of law. If we were not at all times wise, who can say we were at any time timid? If we did not win for every cause, neither did the two-year administration of Thomas Johnson nor the fifteen-year administration of Albert C. Ritchie.

Less than two years ago, I set forth the spirit and objectives of our Administration and, suddenly, it is time to judge the record of that Administration. It is your record as well as mine, so a mid-point scrutiny shall serve the interest of all Marylanders.

In my inaugural address, I spoke of three broad goals for Maryland—fiscal reform, administrative reorganization and Constitutional modernization. The first we have achieved, the second is well underway and the third has failed.

Fiscal reform will unquestionably stand as the greatest single accomplishment of the Agnew Administration—and quite probably of this Legislature, which has worked so cooperatively with me. A progressive tax structure replaced a regressive one, establishing a far more equitable sharing of the tax burden and a far more effective distribution of State tax revenues. For low income families and our elderly, fiscal reform brought financial justice. For our burgeoning metropolitan counties, fiscal reform provided the additional revenue and resources that are essential to finance expanding services.

Fiscal reform recognized the special needs of Baltimore City in such ways as the allocation of extra millions for inner city schools. It recognized the need for an infusion of State funds into primary and secondary education. It paved the way for our first statewide kindergarten system and, subsequently, moved Maryland's educational ranking from the twelfth to the fifth highest in the Union. It recognized the very real problem of escalating crime and provided State aid to subdivisions for improved law enforcement. This move was without precedent, not only in Maryland but