

tiful countryside of this region. It means that the communities of Western Maryland will be brought closer together. But, in another sense, this construction already has boosted the economy of the region and it will continue to do so. It is that phase of this great road building effort that I would ask you to think about with me for a few moments this morning.

When this Administration took office, we were determined to provide each region of this State with modern highways; big main streets which move people and goods with safety and efficiency. The State was without a coordinated highway network. There were annoying, unsafe and costly gaps in our highway system. This Administration was determined to fill these gaps.

In our efforts to beef up our economy, to seek new industry, to provide ample opportunities for existing industry to expand, to create new jobs, Maryland had to be in a position where it could compete with other states on an equal basis. This meant providing the State with an expressway and primary highway network which would give industry the links it needs to bring in raw materials and to ship its finished products to the big urban markets of the country.

In Western Maryland, of course, this meant a good Route 40. I don't know how many opportunities this region of the State missed for economic growth because of the condition Route 40 was in before this Administration took office. There must have been many.

We did not want this to continue to happen. We wanted the Western Region of this State to realize its full potential. We wanted the people of this region to have jobs, the opportunity to make their living here—in the land that they love—rather than have to go elsewhere because of limited opportunities at home. A region cannot grow when its young people have to leave to find work. My Administration undertook many programs to combat this situation and one of these programs was an acceleration of construction on Route 40. I am proud to say that the very first contract award after our modified highway law went into effect was on Route 40—the west slope of Martin Mountain. Since that day, projects awarded have included the roads we are dedicating today—this project, the east approach to the Cumberland Thruway, the east slope of Polish Mountain and the project westerly from Sideling Hill. We are continuing to move forward toward our goal to make a modern highway out of U. S. 40 in Western Maryland.

Several other projects already are under contract and shortly, for example, we will award the contract for the south approach to the Cumberland Thruway. Within the next few months, construction will