

It is my hope that the 1969 session of the General Assembly will consider some of the more vital sections of the defeated Constitution. You have every right to do this, for the rejection of one constitution is *not* the repudiation of the concept of constitutional reform.

The reorganization of the executive branch is of vital importance, for administrative reform is the keystone of modern State government. Reorganization is the citizens' best assurance of effective economic and responsive service by the State.

Further, reorganization will provide for an orderly succession through the establishment of an office of Lieutenant Governor. Four Governors are leaving their posts this month to join the new national administration, yet only one state — our State — has no provision for continuity of executive intent. I will grant that the legislation prepared for your consideration would not have altered the present situation, but it can provide for a more orderly transfer in future years.

Less than two years ago, I attempted to define the direction of our new administration as the pursuit of excellence. I viewed it as an approach which did not promise perfection, but pledged our dedicated pursuit of it. I called upon you to put aside partisan considerations for a new alliance, based on the best interests of Maryland. And I sought the aid of each citizen in this quest.

I did not expect miracles. But we have come far — farther than I expected — and we have come far because we did pursue excellence; we did put aside partisanship; we dared to act with political courage.

We have moved Maryland out of the past into the present and even several paces into the future. I look back over the past two years and am encouraged; I look forward to the future with hope. I shall pray that each of you may continue in the vigorous pursuit of excellence and the achievement of progress for Maryland. And I hope that you will pray for me.

It is with a spirit of gratitude for the years that I have served my State as Governor, and in a spirit of humility in considering the challenge ahead that I submit my resignation.

Above all, it is with a spirit of pride in my State, its history and traditions that I have chosen not to set a precedent in the words of my farewell but adopt those used by Governor William Pinkney Whyte in 1874 when he resigned his office to take a seat in the United