

Q. Governor Agnew, the report in the Associated Press this morning said that the Cooper-Hughes Committee has already come up with two alternative tax plans. Can you shed some further light on this work with the committee? How far is it along?

A. *Let me right off the bat resist any temptation to refer to this group as the Cooper-Hughes Committee. I think there is a great amount of misinterpretation on what this committee is doing as contrasted with the work of the Cooper-Hughes group. The basic differentiation that I want to stress is that the equalization monies which are provided by this committee will be attached to specific programs. And the burdens of government, regardless of what they are, will not be burdens which are taken into consideration unless they fall into categories of necessity.*

Q. Governor, how far do you feel that your tax plan might differ from the original Cooper-Hughes plan? Do you go as far on equalization as they did?

A. No, we don't go as far because I have never felt, and I don't think that the majority of the members of the Legislature feel, that anything a local government wants to spend for its own local purposes should be the subject of equalization. In other words, I don't feel that another local government should support all spending of a companion government. I do feel that in areas of great necessity—health, education, welfare, and police protection—there has to be equalization, and I think most people are willing to agree that this is the case. And I think it's only reasonable for us to face frankly and forthrightly at this time that the wealthier governments are going to pay more than they are going to get from any fiscal reform program because that's what a fiscal reform is all about, at the present time.

Q. When you walk out of the Government House to the State House, what will be foremost in your thoughts for the good of the State of Maryland?

A. The program that is presently before us is a program of tax reform, and I have always referred to money as the spinach of government, and I think that the greatest thing I can do for the State this year is to give the local governments the ability to finance their growing requirements without putting the entire burden on the property owner. So this is purpose number one. There are other programs that we will offer sometime this year, some which will have to wait for more definitive study during the coming year. But the idea will be