

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE

The Secretary of State appeared and delivered a message from the Executive.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Annapolis, Md., May 31, 1962.

Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

I wish, first of all, to thank all of you for the service you rendered your State at this special session of the General Assembly. I know that many of you came here at considerable personal inconvenience, and the people of the State are grateful to you for the time and the energy you spent while here.

As you know, you were asked to come here to take corrective measures to fill a constitutional void created when the court invalidated that clause in our State Constitution which apportions members of the lower House of the General Assembly.

The issue with which you have been struggling during these past few days is a complicated and difficult one. It is also of the greatest significance to the people of the State. To paraphrase the language of our Court of Appeals, in the opinion written in the recent reapportionment case, seldom, if ever, has this body been called upon to make a decision of greater and more far-reaching importance.

The bill you passed to reapportion the House of Delegates is substantially the measure I laid before you at the beginning of the session and asked you to support. I believe it meets the test the courts have laid down for reasonable and fair representation.

You are to be commended for passing it.

This General Assembly did not see fit to pass another portion of my program which would have amended our Constitution to provide a permanent system of apportionment. To me, this is regrettable, but in some respects the position you took is understandable.

For one thing, you were laboring under a severe handicap in time. I know it is difficult to find a solution to a problem as complex as this in a short period of five days.

It is still my wish that the Constitution, which up to now always has contained a provision for the apportionment of the House, be amended in such a way as to establish a permanent, long-range plan of reapportionment.

And so, I was gratified that the conference committee of the Senate and the House, in a report which you adopted, recommended the appointment of a special commission to restudy the problem and recommend a plan for permanent apportionment.

I shall, of course, abide by the wishes you have expressed in this report, and will make it my business to find persons of the very highest qualifications to serve on that commission.

I am confident that it will offer us a program to provide a system of equitable apportionment to serve our needs for many years to come.