Remarks by Governor Mills E. Godwin, Jr.
Presentation of the
Report of Commission on Constitutional Revision
Williamsburg, Virginia
Saturday, January 11, 1969

Whatever the final disposition of the Report of the Commission on Constitutional Revision, I am confident that I speak for the people of Virginia in expressing sincere appreciation to all members of the Commission, its staff, and advisors, for their dedication to a very difficult task.

Virginia is fortunate to have had their service and I am proud to have named the members of this Commission. It is representative of the best minds and thoughts of Virginia and each has brought to the task a high degree of dedication and ability and the benefit of a rich background of public service.
Having served with him in the General Assembly and as Lieutenant Governor during the administration of my distinguished predecessor as Governor, I pay a particular tribute to Mr. Justice Harrison who consented to undertake the assignment as Chairman of the Commission, realizing that it would entail considerable personal sacrifice. I am sure other members of the Commission have also worked diligently with similar disregard to their own personal interest. To every member of the Commission, I express the genuine appreciation of the Commonwealth and her people.
It is apparent from the character and scope of the Commission study that the task assigned the Commission has been approached conscientiously and with the one objective of bringing our organic law into harmony with the requirements of the age in which we are living. Without yet having had the opportunity to thoroughly study the report, I am satisfied that each recommendation is predicated only on the conviction of what is believed to be in the best interest of Virginia and that no recommendation is offered simply for the sake of change in itself. Obviously, the recommendations involve complex questions of policy and law which merit the fullest possible consideration of public officials and private citizens. It is my hope that every individual, and particularly the members of the General Assembly in whose hands rest the fate of this report, will make sure that they have a full and complete understanding of the several recommendations and the reasons therefor before they reach their own firm conclusions.
The Commission is making available a summary of its recommendations to aid in this process.

A revision of our State Constitution is a matter of serious proportions and should be approached, as the Commission has done, only in an atmosphere of deliberation and impartiality. Much of the future welfare of our people, our institutions and our cherished traditions may well depend upon the disposition of this Commission's recommendations.

It is particularly appropriate that the Commission's findings be presented in the historic setting of Colonial Williamsburg where so much of our Constitutional system is grounded.

It was here that so many of the founding fathers conceived the ideas that led to the framing of the great documents of this Republic. Indeed so intimately associated is the name of William & Mary with our country, we might well symbolically refer to this institution as the alma mater of a Nation.
And it was here in Williamsburg that the Convention was held which produced the Virginia Constitution of 1776.

Nearly 200 years later we assemble in this place to honor another benchmark in our history: the presentation of recommendations for changes in the document which is so fundamental to the structure of government in this Commonwealth.

Here, where a sense of history is always felt and where the very atmosphere breathes the presence of the greats of our past, may we who now carry the burden and responsibility find the strength we need to write another brilliant chapter in Virginia's glorious history.

For myself, and for the people of Virginia, I say again how grateful we are for your work, and for the report you transmit to me today.

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