

It is a pleasure to me, I assure you, to take part in these ceremonies in which we open formally Prince George's County's first regional library. Your county government is to be commended for this manifestation of interest in the intellectual and cultural life of the people of this enlightened and progressive community. Throughout the history of civilized mankind, thinkers have acknowledged the great part books have played in shaping our morals and manners. Thomas Carlyle, the British historian and essayist, said the "true university" is a "collection of books". And Stephen Leacock, the American humorist evidently had the same thing in mind when he described how he would build a university.

Leacock said (and I quote):

*"If I were founding a university, I would found first a smoking room; then when I had a little more money in hand I would found a dormitory; then after that, or more probably with it, a decent reading room and a library."*

It is altogether appropriate that this splendid new library building be dedicated to the memory of the late President John F. Kennedy. President Kennedy will be remembered by Americans of this and future generations for many of his attributes, and chiefly among them his dedication to scholarship — to matters of the mind and the spirit. He was an intellectual in the truest sense of that term. He aspired to, and acquired, knowledge and understanding. He loved books. He wrote them and he read them. Books were his friends, just as books have always been the friends of those who seek enlightenment and cultivation in their lives.

Let us hope that the thousands upon thousands of persons who will use these facilities which Prince George's County has provided will have the same feeling toward the books and the material contained in this building that he had.

Your State government, I am proud to say, is acutely aware of the importance of public libraries, and has demonstrated this awareness by increased State appropriations to assist local communities in financing them. As most of you undoubtedly know, an equalization program based on local ability to pay was incorporated into our system of financing public libraries. Under this system, the State meets 30 per cent of the cost of a minimum program of \$1.20 per capita, and the counties and the City of Baltimore defray 70 per cent of the cost of financing these public libraries.

The effort of your State Administration to strengthen public libra-