

THE KIWANIS CLUB OF BALTIMORE
EMERSON HOTEL

October 9, 1941
Baltimore

MARYLAND stands on the threshold of a new era in Conservation. With the enactment by the 1941 Legislature of Chapter 508, which amended the laws relating to conservation of natural resources, and set up a unified Board of Natural Resources, there was accomplished a long-sought re-shaping of the conservation administrative agencies of the State. Now, for the first time, there is one central group to coordinate the efforts of every department concerned with the preservation of the natural wealth with which a bountiful Nature has endowed our State.

From your interest in conservation matters, as evidenced by this meeting today, I would judge that most, if not all of you, are conversant with recent developments in this vastly important field. Nevertheless, to give you the complete picture of the situation as it exists today in Maryland, I will take the liberty to review briefly the new administrative setup as established at the recent session of the General Assembly.

Previous to 1941, there were a number of unrelated agencies looking after the State's natural wealth, of which the Conservation Department and the Maryland State Game and Inland Fish Commission were perhaps the best known. Today the Board of Natural Resources supervises the activities of, and works in close relation with, all the State Departments concerned with conservation. It is a function of this Board to consider the problems of conservation in their broader aspects, to act as a clearing house for new ideas regarding handling of conservation, and to take up such conservation matters as could more properly be handled by such a group than by one of the subordinate agencies. The Board also is empowered to review the work of each member department and submit annually to the Governor a complete report of the accomplishments and recommendations of all the Departments.

Represented upon the Board is, first of all, the Commission of Tidewater Fisheries, whose Chairman was designated in the law to sit as Chairman of the Board of Natural Resources. This Commission, now functioning most effectively under Mr. Edwin Warfield, Jr., as Chairman, previously to 1941 was known as the Conservation Department. It has jurisdiction over all matters pertaining to commercial fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, with particular attention, of course, to the propagation and administration of the oyster, crab and fisheries resources of the tidewater area.

The Commission owns and operates the fleet of patrol boats, some 30 in number, that sometimes are referred to as the Maryland Navy. These boats are on duty at all times in the Bay and in the principal oyster and crab producing tributaries, including the Potomac River.