

REMARKS, NATION RIVERS AND HARBORS CONGRESS

FORT McHENRY

May 25, 1960

Here at this historic shrine, so steeped in the history and tradition of our nation, it is a pleasure to welcome to Maryland the delegates attending the 47th annual *convention of the National Rivers and Harbors Congress*.

All of you, of course, know the story of Fort McHenry, made sacred by the heroism of the Americans who fought and repulsed the invaders in the War of 1812, an engagement which inspired Francis Scott Key to write the vibrant verse that became our National Anthem. We Marylanders are proud, too, that it was here at this Old Star Fort last July 4 that the first 49-star flag was raised officially by direction of the President of the United States. And by a similar presidential order, the first 50-star flag, signifying the accession of Hawaii to statehood, will be raised here for the first time officially at 12:01 A.M. next July 4.

A feeling of reverence grips us when we touch the soil of this birthplace of the "Star-Spangled Banner."

But as we Marylanders stand here, we see not only these great highlights of history. In the panorama that stretches out before us we see the mainspring of the economic life of this State and of much of this region. Here we observe the ships of all nations moving in and out of one the busiest harbors in the country, bringing to us commodities which have been produced in other continents and taking out the goods we have produced for distribution in foreign lands.

Like most of the large cities of the world, Baltimore is indebted to trade and commerce for its origin and its prosperity. Here, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, that great deep-water finger of the Atlantic Ocean, penetrates farthest into our country, touching the important north-south highways and other arteries of communication. Baltimore became a town for that economic reason. It flourishes as a great city today for the same reason.

All of us in Maryland recognize that this Port of Baltimore is our greatest economic asset today, just as it always has been in the past. It is vital to our existence, and we want assurance that it is to be properly maintained, expanded and improved.