

reorganized in the 1959 session of this body. At its first meeting last June 1, the new Commission initiated a series of conferences in Tidewater counties, the purpose of which was to obtain from the broad experiences of the watermen themselves all possible ideas, critical comments and suggestions to aid the Department in planning for the future.

Incidentally, I had suggested years before I became Governor that it would be well for this State agency to make frequent visits to seafood localities and get first-hand information about the problems of the watermen and the industry. I am happy to see this suggestion carried out.

Perhaps the most significant advancement that has been made by this Department is a change in its objective—from being primarily a law enforcement agency to emphasis on the function of rehabilitating the resources of the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries and our ocean territorial waters. From all indications, the Department has found a solution to the long-time need for adequate quantities of shells for large-scale planting. This, I believe, is the key to the rehabilitation of the oyster industry. I have asked for an additional appropriation in the 1960-1961 budget to finance this operation.

The magnitude of the problems of this Department is well known to all of us. Maryland has great water resources, but it is no secret that we have not husbanded and developed these gifts of nature as well as we should have. The program the Department has formulated will, in my opinion, go a long way toward restoring the depleted resources of the Bay and other waters of our tidal region.

I have discussed up to now our efforts to improve the government and to better the services it renders to the people through the revision of existing agencies and the establishment of new ones. With the same objective in mind, we have employed other measures in other agencies and in other areas of activity.

The care and treatment of the unfortunate victims of mental illnesses is a matter of grave concern to all of us. It is a deep satisfaction to me to be able to report a continuing decline in the patient population of our mental hospitals, due to the better care they are receiving as a result of additional personnel in medical and supporting services and to the use of new drugs, both of which have reduced the length of patient confinement. With fewer patients, we will be able to give those remaining better treatment, and you will see in the budget which I am presenting additional appropriation to raise the