

In glancing over the agenda of this 1960 conference, I am sure that the discussion and deliberations this year will result in great benefits to our State. And the time, effort and money we spend to support this conference is a good investment.

The purpose of the conference, of course, is to discuss the ways and means by which we can reduce the tragic loss of lives and property by fires. It has been said many times, but is worthy of repetition here, that of all the hazards we face in our daily lives, fires are man-made and should be controlled by man. And yet, every year, scores of persons lose their lives in Maryland in fires, and millions of dollars worth of property is consumed.

Most of you know of my deep interest in fire protection and fire prevention. It is my hope that by diligent effort we will be able to make Maryland the safest state in the Union against the menace of fires. Knowing you as I do, I know I can count on your full support and cooperation.

Of course, we Marylanders are rather proud of the record we have achieved thus far in protecting our citizens against fires.

My attention was brought recently to an article in a British magazine in which a visitor from England undertook to describe for compatriots what is being done in this country in fire prevention and fire protection. Special mention was made by the author to the volunteer fire service, which he said is "something Americans should be really proud of." He said he found all members of the volunteer service "amazingly keen," and said they devoted "more of their spare time to activities connected with their department than the retained men do in Britain." He cited in particular the volunteer service we have established here in Maryland, and then he went on to say this:

"In my opinion the organization as it exists in Maryland is equal to anything appertaining to the retained service in this country."

Quite naturally, I was pleased to read such a glowing account of our activities here in Maryland, written by a foreigner whose only purpose was to give the people in his country an objective report on what goes on in this country. Credit for this, of course, must go to men like yourselves who have devoted so much of your time, talent and intelligence to safeguarding the lives and the property of the people of this State.

For many years, we in Maryland have emphasized the importance of training in fire protection and fire prevention. The Fire Service Extension of the University of Maryland has played a vital role in this pro-