

gram. A vast majority of the members of our fire companies, paid and volunteer, have taken courses in this school. In the 1959-1960 firemen's training classes, for example, 197 of the approximately 285 companies in the State were represented. The total enrollment of these classes, in which 21 of the 23 counties were represented, was 1,865, or an average of nearly 10 men per fire company. That is one of the reasons why the visiting Englishman could write that our volunteer service in Maryland is equal to the retained service in his country.

As you all know, the week of October 9-15 will be observed this year as "Fire Prevention Week." Its purpose is to create an awareness on the part of the public of the terrible menace of fires, which last year cost the lives of 11,300 persons and destroyed over a billion dollars worth of property.

Particular emphasis will be placed this year upon fires in homes, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs is recommending that all families practice home fire drills. The Association suggests that all families sit down together and discuss escape routes in the event of fires in the home. Afterward, it recommends that all members of the family hold practice drills. This to me seems a highly plausible measure, and in my opinion would greatly reduce losses of lives and property. It is my hope that as many Maryland families as possible will cooperate with the fire departments of their communities in this program.

In conclusion it is gratifying to me this morning to see so many in attendance at this conference on fire prevention As I have stated, I want to make Maryland the safest place in the country. Let me repeat—I know that I can expect the cooperation of all of you here in this undertaking, and I am confident that out of these deliberations will come the kind of program that will aid us in the achievement of that objective.

ADDRESS, DEDICATION OF CRISFIELD
FIRE DEPARTMENT

June 11, 1961

I should like to begin by extending hearty and sincere congratulations to the Mayor and Council of the City of Crisfield, the Somerset County Commissioners, the officers and members of the fire department, local merchants, business firms, clubs and organizations and the many hundreds of individual citizens whose hard work and generous donations