

the vital importance of strong measures to reduce the tragic loss of lives and the inexcusable destruction of property through fires. You have heard it said many times before, I know, but it is a truism worthy of repeating, that fires are man-made hazards, and, being man-made, are susceptible of control by men. And yet, as we know also, we have not attained a degree of control with which we can be satisfied. Our daily confrontation with the useless sacrifice of lives and useless destruction of property in fires is a constant reminder to all of us that our task is not finished.

We in Maryland believe, and have believed for a long time, that the education and training of firemen is our most effective defense against the peril of fires. This Fire Service Extension, which has been built up with so much care here on the main campus of our State University, is our prime example of this thinking.

We are quite aware that other states have developed excellent programs of training in fire protection and fire prevention, but we believe we have developed a program here, too, which is, to say the least, outstanding in many of its qualities . . .

The training philosophy of this training program, as you have noted already by attendance at this short course, I am sure, is "learning by doing." Experience, we know, is the best teacher, and so the instruction here is aimed at staying as closely as possible to actual conditions facing firemen battling a real blaze.

Emphasis is placed, also, on the instructor-student ratio, with the number of instructors compared to the number of students maintained in such a way as to assure personal coaching in all groups where skill development is involved. As one with some experience and some background in this area of endeavor, I know the high quality of instruction that is maintained here in this short course and in the other educational activities of this fire service extension.

Our goal here in Maryland, of course, is the reduction of the fire loss in our State, and the need for education becomes apparent when we observe the statistics which reflect that loss. The monetary loss from fires, to say nothing of the more tragic loss in human lives, mounts with every passing year.

Now, we know that, to a certain extent, these figures reflect the inflationary values of an expanding economy and a growing population. We recognize, too, that the great upsurge in building construction has created a much greater fire risk potential. Maryland is making tremendous advancements as a manufacturing state, and industrial develop-