

than 2,000,000 pounds, with a value of more than \$1,500,000. These gains reflect the swift development, since the early 1950's, of an important soft-shell clam fishery, now producing more than 60 per cent of the entire United States catch; a slight increase in finfish production, with record catches of rockfish in 1960 and 1961, and a substantial rise in the volume and value of the crab catch.

These encouraging trends, however, have been partially offset by a continuation of the long-term decline in the oyster yield. Because of the alarming decline in the too-long-neglected oyster industry, the State's main effort during the past three years has been directed toward the rehabilitation of its oyster resources. Using for the first time hydraulically dredged reef shells, nearly 17,000,000 bushels of cultch have been planted on the natural bars and in areas set aside for the production of seed oysters. This exceeds by several million bushels the total plantings of the preceding 10-year period.

I would point out to you that this is no haphazard operation. The results obtained this year illustrate the wisdom not only of the program but of the manner in which it is being carried out. Spring transplanting of seed oysters from the state seed areas was preceded by a careful inventory, involving sampling at more than 100 stations. The Department of Tidewater Fisheries reports to me that, on the basis of that inventory, it predicted that 500 to 550 thousand bushels of seed were available. Seed areas, the Department reported, were subdivided into sections, and each section was harvested until spat counts fell to the acceptable minimum. As a result, 573,000 bushels of high quality seed were transplanted, where they eventually will provide an additional income of more than \$2 million to the State.

The quantity of seed oysters transplanted by the State thus far in 1962 is more than double that produced in any year of the past decade. And in addition, some 400,000 bushels of seed have been imported by private planters from the James River of Virginia, closely supervised by the Department of Tidewater Fisheries to insure freedom from MSX which has decimated oyster populations in neighboring states.

These efforts, I say, provide the proof that your State government is working, and working effectively, to rehabilitate and revitalize the oyster industry of Maryland.

The Department of Tidewater Fisheries has just completed a preliminary survey of approximately 90 per cent of the shells which were planted on natural bars and in seed areas during this year. On the