

I was very pleased to have the opportunity of reconstituting this Commission, a citizens' body to work with the Bureau of Child Welfare, in planning and carrying out our attack upon delinquency and in coordinating efforts in this field. I am convinced that a successful approach to this serious problem must be a broad one, concerned with all the fields under discussion at this Conference. It must have the coordinated support of all state agencies relating to children, church groups, voluntary community services, individual citizens and especially parents. All are represented on this Commission which has already made itself felt through its aggressive efforts.

I would like to call your particular attention to two parts of this Commission's work. In 1957 well over two hundred of our citizens, as well as appropriate national experts, participated in a comprehensive study of the needs of children in Maryland. At the conclusion of the study, the Commission released its recommendations for action against delinquency in a report entitled appropriately "The Time for Action is Now." I recommend this report to you for careful consideration. There is much yet to be accomplished.

The second aspect of the Commission's work I would like to call to your attention, is its efforts to encourage similar planning groups in the counties. Although there is much that can be done through statewide effort, it is in the communities where children live, that changes must be made. If local citizens get together for this purpose, things will happen. I am informed that such citizen groups have been established in ten counties and that others are under consideration. Many of you here are members of these groups, and I say "more power to you."

As you know, because of the breadth of its interest in children and the outstanding character of its members, I asked the Commission to take on responsibility for Maryland's preparation for the White House Conference, including the planning of this State Conference. I would like, at this point, to thank the Commission and its almost 100 committee members, for the fine work it is doing in this connection.

From this review of progress, in behalf of children in the last ten years, it is obvious that Maryland has come a long way. It is also obvious that in certain fields, Maryland has not kept up with growing needs and that there is much yet to be done. I would like to call upon this Conference, the Commission and the citizens of the State to consider these outstanding problems, and to forge ahead with their solutions. I would particularly like to urge that you give consideration to those steps we can take which will prevent problems for children. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could really keep children healthy in