

ADDRESS, WHEELMASTER BANQUET

BALTIMORE

May 2, 1961

Another year has rolled around since the last Wheelmaster Banquet, and perhaps we should ask ourselves the question: What have we done during the past twelve months in Maryland to make our streets and highways safer?

Reports I have received from our Commissioner of Motor Vehicles show that last year the number of motor vehicles registered in our State increased by approximately six per cent. And from all the information I can gather, it would appear that we may expect heavier increases each year in the number of vehicles in operation on our highways.

This can mean only one thing to those of us who are disturbed by the daily disaster of automobile accidents. It means we will have to strengthen our traffic safety efforts if we expect to achieve a decent safety record in the State. It means that we will have to build highways faster than we have ever built them before, knowing that good highway engineering is one of the most valuable of our safety instruments. It means we will have to accelerate our program of safety education and promotion, acknowledging that, despite the frightful toll of life and limb and destruction of property in highway accidents, traffic safety is yet one of the hardest lessons to teach. It means we will have to renew our endeavor to improve law enforcement, for the presence of traffic patrolmen on our roads is still one of the strongest deterrents to the recklessness which causes automobile mishaps. The "three E's," they are called by our safety experts—engineering, education, enforcement. Whatever measure of success we may attain in our objective will depend upon how wisely we use these resources.

The Maryland Traffic Safety Commission . . . keeps me informed about traffic safety conditions in Maryland by supplying me with a variety of accident statistics. It is possible for us to become extremely disheartened when we examine these figures as they accumulate from day to day, week to week, month to month. Fortunately this year, we have seen some improvement, although certainly not improvement enough to give us any great satisfaction. As of last Friday—the last date for which I have received figures—103 persons had lost their lives in highway accidents occurring in Maryland. In comparison with the figures for the same period of last year, that is a reduction of 72 deaths.