

of ideas. I would like to explain at the outset exactly what led to my request for our discussion of the problems of the Appalachian area on an interstate basis. Quite frankly, my concern began with the problems of my own State.

For some time now, our westernmost counties have not fully shared in the economic gains of Maryland. This has been brought about by a combination of circumstances with which you are all familiar—the decline of the coal mining industry, fewer jobs in railroading, and a reluctance on the part of new businesses to locate in the mountainous terrain of the Appalachian Region. Since becoming Governor, I have been visited by many conscientious and concerned citizens of our western counties, who discussed their problems with me and asked what I felt could be done to promote the development of their region. I promised them I would look into the situation and do my best to help. However, the more I examined the problems of our western Maryland counties, the more it became obvious that these problems were part and parcel of an economic and social pattern which is common to most of the Appalachian area. As a matter of fact, many of the citizens of our western counties look much more to the north—toward Pennsylvania—and to the south—toward Virginia and West Virginia—than to the rest of our State. In so doing, they are following the natural contours of the mountains and valleys of the Appalachians.

In this situation, it seems logical to me that maximum benefits could be gained for our western counties only by including them in a program to rebuild and revitalize the economy of the entire Appalachian Region. Moreover, here in Maryland, only a relatively small portion of our State lies in the Appalachian Region, and I knew that, in our neighboring states to the north and south, there existed a vast reservoir of experience regarding the problems of this Region, as well as large numbers of trained and dedicated people whose work in the Appalachian area over a long period of time had given them a fund of knowledge which was greatly superior to our own. This, therefore, was the beginning of the line of reasoning that led me to invite all of you here today to this meeting.

However, there was an additional consideration, which seemed to me to be of considerable importance. Up to now, almost all of the efforts to help find a solution to the problems of the Appalachian Region have come from one or the other of three different sources—the individual states, the federal governments, or private groups, organizations and foundations. All of these have been doing excellent