

chian Governors. The subject matter is well chosen; for this is an occasion where we truly have a most gratifying story to tell.

Just a little over two years ago—on May 20, 1960—I invited the governors of all of the states in the Appalachian Region to come to Annapolis to discuss the problems common to the region. The moment was not a promising one. The distressed area bill had just been vetoed; stories of the impoverished conditions in the Appalachian area were spread across our front pages, highlighted by the presidential primary contest in West Virginia. I had been governor for only a little more than a year, and had already met on numerous occasions with conscientious and concerned citizens from our Western Maryland counties in an effort to try and find out what could be done to alleviate the economic distress of their region.

The calling of the Appalachian Governors Conference that May was based on a single idea—an idea which I expressed in my opening remarks to the Conference. It seemed logical to me that nothing of real and lasting significance could be accomplished for our Western Counties of Maryland except as part of a program whose aim would be to rebuild and revitalize the economy of the entire Appalachian Region. The more I examined the problems of our Western Counties, the more it became obvious that these problems were part and parcel of an economic and social pattern which was common to the entire Appalachian area.

As those of you who live in Washington, Allegany and Garrett Counties well know, the citizens of this area more often than not look to the North—toward Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania—and to the South—toward neighboring communities in West Virginia—in pursuing the social and business contacts of their daily lives. In so doing you are following the natural contours of the mountains and valleys of the Appalachians, which historically have favored North-South over East-West communications.

There were also several other considerations in my mind when the invitations went out to the Appalachian governors two years ago. One was the feeling that we in Maryland would be able to solve our problems better if we could more easily draw on the talents and experience of those people from other states who had already contributed much time and effort to the problems of the Appalachian area.

Yet, above all of these considerations, or rather because of all of these considerations, it seemed to me that the immediate and impera-