

year in the number of highway fatalities which have occurred on our highways in Maryland. As of the end of last week, 216 persons had been killed in motor vehicle accidents in our State. This is 39 fewer than were killed for a corresponding period of 1963. Of course this is far too many, and we cannot relax our efforts so long as highway accidents continue to take such heavy toll in deaths and in injuries.

One of the first measures for accident prevention which I recommended, and which the General Assembly approved after I became Governor of this State, was the initiation of the point system for penalizing careless drivers of motor vehicles. This system, in effect since 1960, is administered by our Department of Motor Vehicles. It is not possible to ascertain precisely just what effect this system has had, but we are all sure that it has served to reduce the number of accidents on our highways.

In 1961, we inaugurated a system, our first permanent license renewal program in Maryland. Under it, operators are required to renew their licenses every two years. Last year, we established a system of driver rehabilitation. On June 23, 1963, a group of violators attended the first driver rehabilitation clinic at the Department of Motor Vehicles. The purpose of the program is to rehabilitate the motorists who have lost their license, or are in danger of losing them, and to return them to the roads as safe, law-abiding citizens. The program is now statewide in scope, and to date more than 10,500 students have been graduated.

Last year, our Department was awarded top national honors by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators, of which this conference is a part, for its driver licensing program by earning 100 per cent in the 1962 inventory of traffic safety activities by the National Safety Conference.

I cite these efforts which we have been making in Maryland to improve our system of motor vehicle administration to indicate that we are keenly conscious of our heavy responsibilities in this area. I am sure that the other states and the Canadian provinces which are represented here at this meeting are just as conscious of these obligations as we are.

Let me conclude by saying once more that it is a great pleasure to me to be with you here this evening and that the State of Maryland is highly honored to have you with us as our guests at this annual meeting of your conference. I sincerely hope that each of you, through the exchange of ideas, has gained some knowledge that will assist