

ADDRESS, GOVERNOR'S SAFETY-HEALTH CONFERENCE

BALTIMORE

May 7, 1965

Our meeting here this evening marks the conclusion of another Governor's Safety-Health Conference. From my conversation with many of the participants, I conclude that it was a successful meeting. The theme of this Conference is that "information never hurt anyone," and it is our hope that the abundance of sound information which has been disseminated here during the past two days will accrue to the benefit of all the people of our State.

In years past, when I have spoken to this group, I have tried to pinpoint the problem which confronts us here in Maryland as we strive to achieve a greater degree of safety for the people of the State. I have attempted to outline some of the activities and some of the plans we have for a greater measure of safety on our highways, for a more effective program of fire prevention and fire protection and for a more adequate protection of working men and working women on their jobs. Nothing would afford me a greater satisfaction than to be able to report to you that significant gains have been made in these areas. But if we are to make any progress at all in our effort to promote the health and safety of our State, we must face the stark realities of the situation. And the situation today is anything but encouraging. For example, I was stunned, as I think most of you were, when I learned that during the first four days of this month 11 persons were killed on Maryland highways. Do you know that since January 1 of this year highway accidents in Maryland have claimed human lives at the rate of one person every 16 hours! This is a frightful picture. From the beginning of the year through May 4—last Tuesday—194 persons were killed in Maryland motor vehicle mishaps. For a corresponding period of 1964, the figure was 151. In other words, the rate of highway fatalities has increased this year by 28.5 per cent over last year.

A sharp upward trend is evident likewise in injuries resulting from motor vehicle accidents. As of this week, 12,500 persons had suffered injuries in highway accidents which have occurred in Maryland since January 1, last. A comparative figure for the corresponding period of 1964 was 11, 246 injuries.

The National Safety Council advises us that this upward trend in accidents, fatalities and injuries is general throughout the United States. This is a fact to be considered, although I would hope that none of us