

dream of private interests during the first quarter of this century, and of State officials during the Ritchie and Nice administrations in the 1930's. America's entry into World War II caused a shelving of plans to finance and construct such a span.

To William Preston Lane, Jr., assuming office immediately after the war, the construction of a single, mighty span uniting Maryland's shores was not to be forgotten or postponed. For he had heroic dreams for Maryland, and a hero's courage to transform the ideal into the real.

Governor Lane was faced with the challenge of moving Maryland out of the postwar lethargy; of providing services in many fields and modernizing facilities delayed by the war emergency; of helping a people and an economy adjust from wartime production to peacetime consumption.

The leadership and courage he displayed in bolstering the State's financial structure, in the face of public bitterness and even hostility, will long be remembered. So will his vision in building the Chesapeake Bay bridge, which was his greatest dream and aspiration — for no man better understood what a Bay bridge could do for Maryland.

Today, the impact of this bridge in terms of added convenience to Maryland's citizens and added impetus to Maryland's economy is self-evident. Since the Bay bridge opened to traffic in 1952, almost 48 million motor vehicles have travelled across it; over \$67 million in toll income has been collected.

Even more significant has been the economic growth on the Eastern Shore, generated to a tremendous extent by the bridge. The development of Ocean City — the Eastern Shore's resort mecca — offers evidence that the bridge has been a catalyst to Maryland's tourist industry. In 1952, Ocean City's assessable base was approximately \$10.7 million. Today it is \$58.6 million — a growth of almost 600 percent. Admission and amusement receipts from Ocean City reveal identical results. Since 1952, consumer volume has leaped almost 600 percent.

So great has been the success of Eastern Shore resorts and commerce, so tremendous the increase in summertime traffic, that the present bridge has been unable to sustain the demands placed upon it, especially during the tourist season. Within a decade of its opening, the traffic volumes nearly doubled; and as the traffic grew so did the frequency and duration of delays. The very same tourists who had first been attracted to the Eastern Shore by the convenience of the Bay bridge suddenly found themselves repelled by traffic jams that trans-