

Conservation now seems to be on a solid foundation. During the past year the supply was equal to the demand for oysters, fish and crabs. The oyster business shows an increase of 250,000 bushels over and above the season of 1930-31, with a proportionate increase in the number of persons engaged in the industry.

The increase in the oyster supply has been due to extensive shell-planting by the Department, and the enforcement of the cull law. The next few years will reap the benefit of the legislation of 1931, which closed certain waters against the catching of oysters by dredge. The Department anticipates an increase of half a million bushels of oysters this coming season, 1932-33, if the demand for this seafood is normal.

The Department is planting yearly on an average of one million bushels of shells, on which it has been fortunate in having a very good catch of spat each year for three successive years.

In 1928, 13,338,516 soft crabs and peelers and 160,775 barrels of hard crabs were caught in Maryland waters. In 1931, there were 17,256,373 soft crabs and peelers and 296,038 barrels of hard crabs marketed. Prior to the passage of cooperative laws by Virginia and Maryland (notably the sponge crab law in 1926), there was a marked decline in the crab production of Chesapeake Bay. The U. S. Bureau of Fisheries report for 1924 shows but 29,000,000 pounds of crabs taken in the entire Bay. In 1931 this figure had increased to 68,000,000 pounds for the same area.

While we have not the entire statistics on the production of fish, rapid strides are being made by the State Seafood Auditor, in cooperation with the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries and the reports from fishermen. Unfortunately, shad in Maryland waters have not shown an increase in as marked a degree as crabs and oysters. In 1928, there were 1,212,490 pounds of shad marketed, as compared with 1,467,551 pounds in 1931. It is somewhat early to report the number of shad taken during the spring season of 1932, but it is encouraging to know that the Department's spawn takers gathered more shad eggs for propagation purposes this year than for sometime past. The same cannot be said, however, of yellow perch, as our collection of eggs from the Severn River hatchery this spring was not as successful as in a number of past seasons. The effects of the 1930-31 drought, the Department believes, is responsible for the decline in yellow perch production at this particular station.

### Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

During the latter part of 1931, the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, which was erected on a site overlooking the Patuxent River and Chesapeake Bay on Solomon's Island, was completed. This laboratory, which was formally opened in June, 1932, will afford a wild life research and study center, where facts tending toward a fuller appreciation of nature may be gathered and disseminated. Formal class work