

county waters. This county has 75 square miles of water area and 380 square miles of agricultural lands. In 1925 the oyster production was 111,107 bushels. In 1931 it had increased to 300,090 bushels. The figures for the crab industry are even more spectacular. In 1925 about 1,200 barrels of hard crabs were marketed from these waters, whereas in 1931 the records show 23,094 barrels. Soft crab shipments in 1925 were negligible; in 1931, 203,268 soft crabs were marketed.

According to the Seafood Auditor's statistics gathered for the year 1931, there were 66,633,829 pounds of seafood of all kinds: fish, oysters, crabs, clams, etc., marketed from the waters of Maryland during that year, the value of which is estimated at \$2,705,832. The fishermen engaged in taking these seafoods from the waters total 9,558, and in addition this industry gives employment to 7,712 persons who pack and prepare the water products for market. These people receive \$1,708,958 for their share of the work. Based on these figures, the Conservation Commissioner assesses the value of these "meadow lands" of the Chesapeake to the State of Maryland at \$45,000,000. The State possesses few if any other single resource that surpasses its water crop.

### The Oyster Industry

Due to the lack of demand for all commodities and a general overproduction of foods, the oyster interests found difficulty in marketing the crop from our waters. Therefore the production for the 1932-33 season failed to show the increase that was anticipated from the supply of oysters on the bottom. Oysters, fortunately, unlike agricultural crops, which must be harvested at a given time, can remain on the bottoms until the demand increases and be the better for the additional period of growth.

The Conservation Department found it advisable to move young oysters from certain bars where they were overcrowded to other areas where they would have a better opportunity to mature. This was carried out on Hodges Bar, where some 8,000 bushels of oysters were successfully transferred to Love Point for the better growing conditions there afforded. Another transfer of 10,000 bushels of oysters from the shoal water bars of the St. George's river, Potomac section, where they were in danger of destruction from exposure at low tide in severe winter weather, were removed to the safety of deeper water.

In addition to these transfers of oysters, the Department completed the most successful season since the inauguration of its shell replacement policy in 1929 by the placing overboard on selected natural oyster bars of 1,325,515 bushels of shells. This brings the total of shells put back on the depleted rocks of Chesapeake Bay and tributaries to 3,806,522 bushels. From every section of tidewater Maryland the Department is now receiving the fullest co-operation in its shell planting program, as the watermen and packing interest alike see the necessity for and benefits of this work.

### Chesapeake Biological Laboratory

One of the most important events in the Department's activities during the past year was the formal opening and beginning of operations at the Chesapeake Biological Laboratory. The dedication of the new building took place on July 19th, and a very interesting group of instructors from several colleges and universities of the State were assembled for the first season's work, which was largely in the nature of an experiment. The following institutions are taking part again in the second season's work: Johns Hopkins University, St. John's College, the University of Maryland, Goucher, Washington and Western Maryland Colleges.