

themselves, one way or the other, on this question. In voting on the referred law of 1939, setting up a separate agency for the handling of the commercial fisheries, 147,602 voted against the measure and 57,220 voted in favor of it. The proposed legislation was, therefore, defeated by a majority of 90,382.

This is the first expression of its kind in the history of our State. I am gratified that steps were taken to have the people express themselves. As a result of the discussion and proposals which have been in the forefront during the past two years, it is no exaggeration to say that more attention is focused on this subject now than ever before. I venture the opinion that we will have made ten years progress in two years if we follow up the decision of the people by bringing about a satisfactory program.

I interpret the vote to mean a sizeable majority of our citizens prefer an unified, coordinated Conservation program. Certainly the legislation adopted at the last session aimed toward a separate handling of Conservation questions. The people decisively rejected that measure and it seems entirely logical to conclude that the reason they rejected the measure was that they preferred a unification in the State's regulation of these related questions.

But lest it be thought that this proposal bodes ill for the tidewater section, let me emphasize this point. Even greater consideration can be given the commercial fisheries under a well-planned set-up linking together the various subjects than is now the case. It will be admitted that at the present time the State is giving earnest attention to the rights and opportunities of those fine citizens of our State whose livelihood depends upon the seafood industry. We want to continue that effort. But we want to do even more and, while retaining all the present measures for their benefit, it is intended to give even wider recognition to them. Two vital factors present themselves in shaping the State's policy toward the commercial fisheries.

One is that it is desirable to increase the output and to improve the quality because the seafood product is good to eat and is beneficial to the human system. But an even more important fact is that a large portion of our population depends for its livelihood on this industry. Therefore, whatever is done to benefit such a sizeable number of citizens is of benefit to the entire State. Again I say that, in any program which is advocated before the next General Assembly, those interested from the tidewater section will be given all the consideration and recognition they now enjoy and more.

Thus far I have used the term "Conservation" in referring to the question at issue. It happens that that term is understood by too many of our people to be confined to the handling of the tidewater questions, particularly that relating to the oyster. Thus it is that far-reaching questions, including reforestation, mining, stream pollution, soil and shore erosion are not thought of by some people when we use the word "Conservation."

It might be wise to change the title in any comprehensive program that is proposed. Actually what we are working upon are our State resources. You might consider the advisability of attempting to change the popular concept of this question by designating a new governing body as a State Resources Commission.

Let it be understood that, in striving to reach the ultimate goal which is the advancement of the State's interest for the benefit of all our people, there is no ulterior question or petty politics involved. The guiding consideration is not to take away any authority or to unseat any administrator simply