

STATE-WIDE SAFETY CONFERENCE DINNER

Hotel Emerson, May 19, 1941

Baltimore

IT is a happy augury for the future well-being of the industrial workers of Maryland, that the State Industrial Accident Commission has received such whole-hearted cooperation from both industry and labor in this first State-wide Safety Conference.

Much has been said during the past two and one-half years about the State's accomplishments in the field of legislation looking to the safeguarding of labor's interests and, truly, we may all feel gratified with the advances thus made.

Both in the field of unemployment compensation, and in compensation for industrial accidents and diseases, Maryland is well in the forefront of the progressive states of the Union, we hope benefits have been increased, coverage has been broadened, and the various laws affecting the interests of our workers have been brought closer into line with the ideal in this direction.

Some of you may perhaps have read, however, at some time or another, the story of "The Ambulance Down In The Valley." In a certain country district there was a very dangerous turn in the road, close to the edge of a steep cliff, at the bottom of which reposed a populous village. Accidents occurred with appalling regularity, and many were the killed or seriously injured travellers, who, having missed the turn, went over the cliff and were carried off to the hospital, or morgue, by the emergency ambulance crew stationed there.

From time to time, far-sighted residents of the district appealed to the county officials to erect a fence around the edge of the cliff, in order to prevent the accidents that were occurring so frequently. But invariably, their requests for protective measures were met with rebuff, for the officials felt that they were doing their part by supplying the "ambulance down in the valley", and nothing was ever done at the point of accident.

Fortunately, while as a result of laws which have been passed recently, the "ambulance down in the valley" has been provided in the form of greater benefits to the workman who is unfortunate enough to be injured or out of employment. We have not felt that, in so doing, we were by any means fulfilling our complete duty to the residents of the State.

Particularly now, with the great increase in industrial activity in Maryland and the consequent upswing in accidents, the fact has been impressed upon our minds of the great, and in all too many cases, needless wastage occasioned by the many preventable industrial accidents. It was with this in mind that the Chairman of the State Industrial Accident Commission, Mr. Moylan, projected the idea of a State-wide Industrial Safety movement, and immediately secured the backing of the Administration. We all recognized that such a movement