

MARYLAND TOBACCO GROWERS' ASSOCIATION MEETING

July 23, 1941

Seaside Park

TOBACCO is the predominant cash crop of Southern Maryland farmers. About 70 percent of the farms in this area raise tobacco and tobacco constitutes about 70 percent of the total value of all farm products sold.

Tobacco is raised upon approximately 5,500 farms in Southern Maryland, involving about 38,000 acres and producing an average of between 24,000,000 and 32,000,000 pounds, or about 40,000 to 45,000 hogsheads of tobacco. The production per acre varies by season and counties, but on the average is about 800 pounds per acre.

The value of the crop varies between \$5,000,000 and \$6,000,000, depending upon annual production and price.

Notwithstanding the tragic world situation, the outlook for Maryland tobacco seems encouraging. American cigarette makers have been using large quantities of Turkish tobacco, much of which is raised in Greece. With this source of supply cut off, the demand for Maryland tobacco is stimulated because Maryland tobacco is said to be the nearest approach to the Turkish brands.

In the consumption field there is a steadily increasing demand for cigarettes. Latest figures indicate an increase of 10 percent use of cigarettes during the past year.

The market demands seem to bear out these statements as I am informed that the prices of Maryland tobacco thus far are very good. The Government reports an average of thirty cents per pound thus far, and if this is maintained, it will establish an all-time record for the Maryland crop. Moreover, I am glad to know that the 1941 crop now growing is the largest acreage planted since 1887.

We all appreciate the problem presented in the marketing field of this important crop. As Governor of the State, I have reported to you that I shall be very glad to do anything in my power to promote the interests of Southern Maryland and the best interest of the tobacco grower in the marketing of this crop.

Last fall I was petitioned by your Association to appoint a committee to investigate the tobacco marketing problem. I appointed Mr. R. Bennett Darnell, Mr. Claude Turner and Dr. T. B. Symons.

In the very short period this Committee conducted an exhaustive study of the situation, receiving testimony from growers, buyers, commissionmen, warehousemen and manufacturers. Testimony was received from interested growers concerning marketing.

The Committee submitted a number of recommendations relating to methods by which the condition of the tobacco farmer can be definitely improved.