

debate and, as you recall, was based specifically upon the studies and recommendations of the committee of citizens which I appointed prior to the last session of the General Assembly, which committee had as its chairman, Mr. William F. Schluderberg. The personnel of this committee, representing a wide diversity of viewpoints and conservation interests, worked long and diligently in studying the problem and in formulating recommendations which were in a large measure enacted into law. A very great debt of gratitude is due to all of those who served on this committee for the public service they have rendered.

While some had other views as to the most beneficial program for the complete unification of our conservation administration, I believe the plan, as recommended by this committee and finally adopted, represents a very great advance toward a more effective coordination of the work now being done by the various State agencies directly concerned with conservation matters. Through it, we can secure a closer community of interest among the officials in charge of our conservation work and, as expressed by the committee, it should point the way towards a better understanding of the interrelation of our forest, fishery, mineral, game, water, mine and other natural resources. Furthermore, it will serve as a clearing house for constructive suggestions and recommendations with respect to conservation matters.

The effective management of any of our natural resources is the proper concern of the people of the entire State and the establishment of this Board makes possible the focusing on problems affecting the State's natural resources of a viewpoint free from sectional interest or bias. The caliber of men who have agreed to serve on this Board indicated that citizens of broad vision are ready to assist if the venture is divested of political or ulterior considerations.

If we will examine each of the fields of conservation with which your Board has to deal, I think that we can find grounds for encouragement in recent progress made. But we do not have to look far to discover much useful and necessary work yet to be accomplished before we can be reasonably content that we have dealt effectively with these resources.

Potentially one of our richest resources is our Chesapeake Bay and its tidewater tributaries. In terms of the improved administration of our existing laws and with respect to constructive legislation recently passed, there are grounds for satisfaction. Certainly our oyster industry has benefited very materially through the strict enforcement of the oyster cull law. This has resulted in an increased harvest through the greater growth resulting from small oysters being left on the bottoms for further growth, and in better demand for the higher grade product which is being offered for sale. This has meant considerably augmented income for those engaged in the industry. There is no doubt, however, that we are very far from realizing on the full productive possibilities of our oyster producing areas.

Our supply of shad and herring continues on a comparatively low level, but here again we have reason for optimism in view of the constructive fishery legislation developed by the industry in cooperation with the conservation officials of the State and the Federal Governments. In fact, I am advised