

Chairman Houston, of the Virginia Commission, made a short address outlining the resolution passed by the Virginia Legislature, and made a statement of the work that lay before the joint commission as viewed by the Virginians. Chairman Benson spoke in behalf of the Marylanders, thanking Virginia for her invitation and outlining the views of his conferees. He stated that Maryland wished to give Virginia an opportunity to perfect its fish laws, and, in fact, wanted both States to adopt such legislation that would prevent Federal control under the game law, it being construed by the United States Government that it could control migratory fish as it does birds. He declared that he believed in State's rights and that they had come to hear what Virginia had to offer and would endeavor to meet the proposition if possible. He closed by saying that if Maryland and Virginia did not settle upon practical legislation for conserving the sea-food productions, the United States would unquestionably do so.

Senator Mapp stated that crabs and fish proper might be regarded as migratory products of the Chesapeake and moved that the matter of crabs be taken up in the morning session and fish in the afternoon session, which was agreed to.

Hon. W. McDonald Lee, former Commissioner of Fisheries of Virginia, was called upon and spoke at length upon the habits and habitants of the Chesapeake and especially the blue crab, dwelling upon the enormity of this business. He said that the Chesapeake furnished 75 per cent. of the crabs of the world, and that Crisfield, Maryland, which shipped almost entirely Virginia crabs, furnished 60 per cent. of the out-put in the United States. He declared crabs were diminishing and while he heartily endorsed winter dredging, he stated that soft crabs must be protected and suggested three plans: First, the cull law, which Virginia already has. This requires that only hard crabs 3½ inches from tip to tip can be taken. Second, protecting the sponge crab or gravid mother from scrapes and trot lines. Third, preventing the doubles from being taken, but this last, he declared, was absolutely impractical as there was no way to enforce it. Quoting Dr. Prince, of Canada, he said: "You cannot deplete the ocean, but you can deplete the locality." He went on to say that the mouth of the Chesapeake was only eight miles wide and yet untold wealth poured in through this source. The fish and crabs coming up the coast tasted brackish water and came in the Bay. This occurs year after year, and it was necessary for the Chesapeake to protect the seafood migrating this way.