

Senate—Hon. Harding Walker, Hon. John R. Saunders and Hon. J. E. West; House—Hon. J. Harry Rew, Hon. Robt. O. Norris, Hon. T. A. Tett and Hon. Philip A. Murray.

The above committee having been notified, a meeting was called at 8 P. M., January 18, 1916, in the State Corporation Commission Court Room (Old Senate Chamber). The full Virginia committee and other interested were present, and the meeting was called to order by Speaker Houston, the former chairman of the committee. Mr. Houston spoke of the meeting of the Joint Legislative Commission from Maryland and Virginia at Old Point Comfort, Virginia, August 3 to 5, 1914, and he said that the two committees had agreed that something must be done to protect the crabs and fish of Chesapeake Bay. At this point he introduced Swepson Earle, of Maryland, who was sent down by Senator Benson, chairman of Maryland committee, to represent him and the State of Maryland at this conference.

The following is quoted from the Richmond Times-Dispatch of January 19, 1916:

“Mr. Earle, of the Maryland Commission, spoke at length on the blue crab of Chesapeake Bay and the importance of conserving the crab industry for the crab fishermen of Virginia and Maryland. The protective measures, he said, most essential for the conservation of this industry, are a cull law on hard crabs, five inches from tip to tip of spike, and the protection of the female egg-bearing crabs, which are found extensively in Virginia waters near the capes. He pointed out that the Virginia crab scrapers working in Pocomoke Sound depend upon the protection of the female crab when she came to Virginia waters during the winter to spawn.”

Representatives from Hampton and Newport News were present, representing the McMenammin Crab Packing Company. When Allen D. Jones, vice-president of the above company, was heard, he objected to the protection of the female crab, as he said that their company would have to shut down several months during the year. Mr. Jones acknowledged that the Hampton packing companies had been using the egg-bearing female crabs for years. He was followed by S. S. Coston, who operates in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. Mr. Coston was heartily in favor of the cull law, but thought the protection of the female crabs, bearing eggs, should be limited to the month of August. The Maryland representative stated that if Virginia was not willing to do her part in the protection of this crustacean, that the industry would dwindle in both States.