

we have perhaps assured the saving of at least a few lives that, barring quick action, would be lost.

But is not only in the field of legislation that we can embark on programs designed to reduce as much as possible the economic drain and unnecessary loss of life caused by fires. On the occasion of my recent visit to the Fire Department Instructors Conference in Memphis, I advised them that I was convinced that there is much yet to be learned in the techniques of fire fighting and in the development of fire prevention programs. I told them that it is essential that fire prevention conferences continue to be held bringing together individuals of specialized knowledge. To my mind, it is primarily through the sharing of specialized information that we can effectively reduce our fire losses. . . .

Last month, hundreds of business firms in Maryland and many public officials participated in the Governor's Annual Safety-Health Conference in Baltimore. While the purpose of this conference was to promote safety in general, it does serve to impress upon participants the hazards of fire and, in that sense, contributes to the overall development of an effective fire prevention program here in Maryland.

As you can see, our record in the field of fire prevention and our willingness to continue to search out additional effective aids in combatting fire is good. But as Governor of this State and as an old fire fighter myself, I am determined to see that it shall continue to be improved.

Much of the credit for our success in the development of modern fire fighting techniques and in reducing fire losses in general must go to you here today. But credit also must go to the Fire Service Extension Division at the University of Maryland where so many of you received your initial training in the skills of fire fighting. Since that division was first established at the University back in the 1930's, many thousands of persons have participated in the training program. More than 3,000 firemen take part in this fire fighting program every year and, this year, Bob Byrus tells me that more firemen will receive training than in any year since the program was initiated. This is a wonderful tribute to the fire fighters of Maryland and to the Fire Service Extension Division. It is the reason why, in the field of fire prevention, Maryland sets the standards for the nation.

In closing, permit me to once again thank you for inviting me to be here with you today at this seventy-second annual convention of the Maryland State Firemen's Association. To me, this is more than