

effort—to convince these fire instructors who came to the conference from all parts of the United States and Canada that Maryland is indeed, as it claims to be, “Tops in Fire Service Training.” I hope I proved a good emissary of Maryland, for I should like for the world to know, as you and I know, how much we have accomplished in this State, through our volunteer and paid fire departments and through the fine training program that we have established at the University of Maryland, in saving lives and property by emphasizing the importance of fire protection.

We owe this service to our communities, of course, but I believe it is time that we do a little public-relations work for the firefighters to let the people in these communities know just how valuable the service is that they perform. We hear and read much about traffic safety. And I may say that it is of primary concern in my Administration. I called a conference of traffic officials, traffic magistrates and police officers in Annapolis just last Monday to discuss methods of reducing the heavy toll of lives and property in automobile accidents. But the point I would make is that while traffic safety is of importance—perhaps of paramount importance—fire safety likewise is important. And it is time that public concern with the value of adequate fire protection be brought to a level with its concern with safety on the highways.

In my talk in Memphis, I cited some statistics which I thought were of interest. Do you know that more children lost their lives in fires each year than are killed by infantile paralysis, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles and scarlet fever combined? You perhaps do know that, having access to the same figures that I had. But I dare say few parents know that, and I think they ought to be told that as many times as is necessary to convince them of the wisdom of supporting firefighting services in their cities, towns and communities.

I think we in Maryland have demonstrated an awareness of this condition and a commendable determination to do something about it. There is no point in boasting about it too much, but I do think that we firemen are justified in some expression of pride in our fire service

This association, as well as other groups, has displayed a fine public spirit by its interest in fire prevention. I think undoubtedly that you will render to the people of the State and to the citizens of your several communities the finest of public services if you continue with the good work you have been doing in the reduction of fire loss. I hope it may be possible for me, in the office I now hold, to be of assistance to you in that worthy cause.