

Both of these measures were based on reports and recommendations of a Commission on the Conservation of Natural Resources appointed pursuant to a resolution of the General Assembly, and a Committee of the Seafood Industry. They contain some of the recommendations of each, but not all of the recommendations of either. When these measures were presented to the General Assembly, I urged the favorable consideration of both bills. While it was the opinion of many who have a deep interest in the rehabilitation of the oyster industry in Maryland, and to some degree I shared this opinion, that the proposal for reorganization of the Commission of Tidewater Fisheries and the expanded oyster-propagation program was not the ideal solution of the problem, I do believe it embodied an essential and constructive step toward restoring the oyster production and industry in Maryland. I still believe that to be so.

We are, however, confronted with a situation which would have the effect of rendering these measures a nullity, at least for a period of sixteen months. I am confident that organized groups which have expressed opposition to these measures will, as announced, obtain referenda on them. While as a matter of principle I regard the referendum as a necessary and desirable safeguard, I feel that no constructive purpose would be served by presenting Senate Bills No. 429 and No. 430 for referendum, for these reasons:

The operation of the legislation therein contained would be suspended pending submission to the voters to within sixty days of the meeting of the 1951 General Assembly.

The pending referendum probably would eliminate any approach in the 1950 General Assembly to the problem of expanding the program for oyster propagation.

If approved by the voters in the fall of 1950, the reorganization of the Commission and the administrative and revenue programs embodied in Senate Bill No. 429 would become operative in the midst of the oyster season, at which time it would be impossible to undertake the implementation of the legislation in an orderly and satisfactory manner.

And, finally, both those who favor and oppose the provisions of this legislation have advised me that it is their judgment that a referendum on the legislation, which does not present concisely defined issues, in all probability would engender a bitter campaign that would further split opposing forces to the detriment of future efforts to devise a workable and constructive rehabilitation program.

Senate Bill No. 430, reorganizing the Board of Natural Resources, embodies legislation designed in the light of and as a part of the proposals in Senate Bill No. 429, to the extent that it is predicated, in part, on the projected reorganization of the