

REMARKS – CONGRESSMAN ROGERS C. B. MORTON

Thank you very much, Dr. Holton. It is a warm pleasure and privilege for me to stand here on the platform with a beloved Maryland citizen, a great former Governor of Maryland and a great friend of conservation, Millard Tawes. Governor, it makes me happy to be here with you. I have such a very warm spot in my heart, and so does every Marylander, for you and the great service you have rendered to our State.

Officers and Directors of the Southeastern Association, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted that George Shields invited me to attend this meeting. I'm reminded of one of Governor Tawes' great accomplishments as Chief Executive. He provided a great main street from one end of the Eastern Shore to the other by developing a dual highway system which we call Route 50. But, inevitably, this road split some of our farms in half, and the farmers were forced into tilling both sides of the road, which is an inconvenience, but nevertheless is part of progress. Not far from where I live, there is a farmer who has to farm both sides of the road. Late one afternoon, having farmed the side away from his house, he was moving his entourage of cattle, tractors, wagons and equipment across the road. Just as he had all these trappings grouped in the middle of the highway, a Cadillac came barreling down the road and had to swerve to miss him. He swerved out into the field and then back on the road and went on south. The farmer turned to his son and said, "My God, boy, we just got out of that field in time!"

I think there is something to that story. The thing I want to make sure of is that in our great zest to develop communication systems, and our great zest to develop America to keep its economic growth pliable and active, we don't get out of the field of conservation, of game management and of the things we must do to keep our environment compatible with us and with the rest of nature.

One of the things we as human beings tend to forget is that we are part of the biological world. As long as we are part of that biological world, we are inevitably and surely dependent upon it and dependent upon a compatibility with all other life for our own survival. This is something we have failed to transmit to the generations oncoming in this very highly urbanized and industrial society. I don't believe the average youngster feels he is part of the biological world. Yes, he loves his dog, he loves his cat, he loves to go to the zoo, and he likes to watch the birds soar in the air; but I don't think he feels he is part of that life cycle — part of that intimate relationship of one species to another and part of that inter-dependence for survival we have with all other aspects of nature.

Recently, as a participant in the Governor's Conference on the Chesapeake Bay at the Wye Institute, I made several suggestions. One was that we go into much more depth in our educational system in the field of conservation and in the field of our trusteeship of the environment which we have inherited from God. I don't believe the curricula in the elementary and secondary schools of this Nation are directed fully enough towards aspects of conservation. In order for conservation to be totally meaningful, it must be part of the daily life of every person. As good a job as they do, we cannot expect the members of an Association such as this — the keepers of the game — to do the whole job. They can provide the guidelines and enforce the law; but the total conservation of our environment must come from a universal effort.

The way you get people to do things is to get them interested. Why do we get a big crowd at a ball game to see the Birds or the Colts? We do it by having a good ball club and active competition in which that ball club can perform and can perform dramatically. This stimulates interest across the board. Those of us interested in conservation must make of ourselves a good ball club; we must perform and we must do things that catch the interest of people everywhere. If we don't do that, we will find ourselves fighting an up-hill battle against fantastic pressures, and I'm going to talk a few minutes about those pressures.

First, I'd like to deal with what I think is a proper relationship between Federal and State agencies in the field of game management, and game management as it applies to other aspects of conservation. We are only at a beginning and have not in any way perfected the relationship between Federal and State agencies. In some cases we overlap, and in some cases we have even a conflict of interest.

I believe the agency closest to the people, the agency most intimately involved with relationships between neighbors, is the proper agency for the custodianship of the natural environment. I hope we in the Federal system will direct more of our attention toward assistance to the states through block grants which can be used by State people and State agencies in such a way as to get the most benefit out of the tax dollar allocated to this particular area. There would be less tendency for actual management to be carried out by agencies of the Federal system.

There are some areas, where obviously established guidelines and established patterns have developed, where this is not altogether practical. The management of our game refuge system, the Federal Refuge System, and the management of game conservation practices in the National Park System and many others unquestionably will be continued by the Federal agencies involved.

But there is a great deal more we can do in the development of habitat and conservation practices which the states cannot afford to do with the limitation they have from a financial point of view. I hope these practices will be established by the states with Federal help, rather than by the Federal Government for the states. This is the way our republic is organized; this is the way we get the best people doing the job; and this is the way we get going to develop the ball club we must develop in order to enlarge the national interest in conservation. I hope we are not satisfied, even though the existing State and Federal agencies are doing a creditable job. If we think this is the job we have to do, as the scope and level we're presently doing it, we're just whistling Dixie, because we are not winning the battle. Let me go into some of the aspects of the battle.

First I would like to talk about estuaries and wetlands. We have here in Maryland the Mediterranean of America. We have probably the greatest estuary, in many aspects, in the world, namely the Chesapeake Bay. This body of water and its shoreline, its periphery and its environment are truly unique.

The Japanese once said, "Give us the Chesapeake Bay and we will give you all the oceans." They were talking about its productivity from a human food standpoint, the fishery. The fishery depends entirely upon the environment. I realize the commercial fishery of the salt water is somewhat out of your bailiwick; on the other hand, it is somewhat in your bailiwick, depending upon the speciality you as individuals practice in your game and fish management configuration.

The Chesapeake Bay has developed certain trends during the period between World War II and today. The multi-use load on the Bay has increased by almost geometric proportions. There is more shipping, there is more recreation, there is more commercial fishing effort, there is more utilization of the water itself by the human being.

The life potential or the biological potency of the Bay does not depend entirely on its water by a long shot; it depends upon its periphery. The beginning of the food chain cycle is in the wetlands and in the marshes; if you cut the food chain cycle anywhere, that, of course, cuts the whole cycle.

What has happened to the periphery of the Chesapeake? The periphery has suddenly been invaded by man and the works of man. The industry, the dredge, the resident — every possible thing he can do, man is doing. And he is doing it at a rate of speed that is consuming the area, and at a rate of speed which is overcoming the natural resistance of nature. It is fantastic to me to witness the great strength of nature. Nature is overwhelmingly powerful; in spite of our tremendous efforts to destroy certain aspects of nature, nature has survived in its cyclic and magnificent manner. But the Chesapeake is showing signs of giving up because of what we are doing.

Here is a great example of a combination of maritime inland and wetland environment that must be preserved. Why must it be preserved? Why shouldn't the Chesapeake Bay become a Dead Sea if this is what the people want to do? If it's more important to dredge up and overflow the wetlands with spoil, if it's more important to ship a leaking tanker from foreign port into a metropolitan port on the Bay than it is to preserve the cleanliness of the water, then let's go that route and forget it. But I don't think it is worth it. My firm belief and my creed is that if we don't preserve the

Bay, if we don't preserve the habitat of the natural world, then somewhere out in time there is a stake, and on that stake it says, "Beyond this point man cannot survive." It's as simple as that.

Conservation is not sort of an aesthetic game you play in order to get a kick out of it. Conservation is a matter of life or death to the human race, and as soon as the people on this planet begin to understand that, then your job will become easier. Your job and my job is to make people understand that. There is no middle ground to it. You either save the estuary, you save the uplands, you save the habitat, whether it's the rabbit, the squirrel, the wild turkey, the quail, or whether it is the micro-organisms on which the life cycle starts and which these animals need to survive.

The whole miracle of life, the whole energy of the biological world, takes place in the top four inches of the soil and in those magic waters which provide the food for the species that live in the water. If we don't take care of it, if we let it erode away, if we clear it all, if we pave it all, then what happens? Sooner or later we divorce ourselves from the life cycle, and when we do that, we are then in a biological vacuum and we then, the human being, cannot survive. I don't know why we have such a hard time selling that point. Yet the planning organizations across this land, who are entrusted with land-use planning, fail, in my opinion, to recognize that basic principle. We see constant encroachment on the environment.

This does not mean we cannot expand economically; it does not mean we cannot bring new plants and new jobs into being where they are needed; it does not mean the rural areas have to be sterilized and put into a wilderness concept — though we need some wilderness areas; it does not mean we cannot be compatible with nature. But it does mean that in order to be compatible with nature, we have to do some compensating things as we go along. We have to protect and we have to develop. Conservation, in the modern sense, cannot be just a matter of conserving and freezing a condition as it is; it also must be a matter of development, of development of habitat in one area in place of habitat that is being lost in another area. This is most important, and I think there are many ways we can do it.

The Endangered Species Bill we passed in the House of Representatives this year is a thrust in this direction, though here we deal with a very small segment of the animal kingdom. It is a recognition that this Nation has a national purpose to preserve those species throughout the world, not only of mammals, but other elements in the phylum of the animal kingdom; and that it is the purpose of this Country to remain compatible and not to exterminate in the natural world. But, of course, this is a difficult job. More endangered species every year come off the ledger.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the World Wildlife Fund, Ducks Unlimited, the Sierra Club, and the many other conservation groups for their efforts in this direction. We have recognized what our job is, but we haven't been willing, as a Nation, to devote enough energy, enough money and enough drive to get at the job, and I think we can. Let's see what some of the things we can do are.

One of the things we can do is to encourage the educational community to put conservation high on the list of musts in the education process. We must develop a knowledge among the young and growing minds of their responsibility to the environment and of their trusteeship. Let us think of ourselves more as trustees of the future than as hostages of the past; let us realize that as we grow from a 180 million-people-nation to a 300 million-people-nation, there are many things we are going to have to do. Where we should start, in my opinion, is with the young mind.

The second thing we can do is to develop in our agricultural program and agricultural leadership the development of habitat on the farms in America. This is where the open space is managed the closest. Forty percent of America is in the Bureau of Public Land, and this forty percent of America is managed by an agency, but that mostly is arid land, mountained land and land in the far west. Where is the land managed? Where is the land observed the closest? Don't tell me there is a single warden or a single person in our game and fish family who has keener knowledge of any block of land than the farmer. But the farmer has been thinking of one thing: he has been thinking of production and cost. If he has some conservation practices going

in terms of habitat development, they are kind of a hobby with him, a kind of an interest he has — a wholesome, wonderful interest. This Nation's strength is a reflection of the agricultural ability of the American farmer. But our responsibility is not only to provide food and fiber. If we can get him thinking in terms of development of habitat on part of his land, if we can begin to have him feel a responsibility not only to 120 bushels of corn, or to 60 bushels of barley, but also a responsibility to developing in the nooks and crannies of his land habitat for the kind of game that is best suited to that latitude and that environment and that feed condition, we have done something. We have then brought on board this conservation team, literally thousands of people who have the ability, the management responsibility of land. Think of what this can do. So I would encourage a closer link between farm leadership and game and fish leaders so we begin to get more excitement, more interest in the agricultural world in the preservation of the natural environment.

I think we have to do the same thing on our public lands. We have to set an example in our National Parks, our State Parks. We have to bring people into a consciousness of conservation when they visit our parks for recreation purposes. We are in the selling game, and there is no escape from it, because everyone else is selling in competition with us.

In short, I feel very strongly that we have our work cut out for us, and we have to get more support for this work from the legislative bodies, of both the national and state governments. *If we can work hard in the public sector, if we can develop a new feeling of responsibility in young people's minds toward conserving our natural environment, then the support will be forthcoming.* The support of a legislative body for a given area of our life, or the business of our civilization, is in large measure the direct reflection of public interest in that area.

I have been a strong advocate of regional land use planning concepts — the river basin pact, for example, or a total concept for an estuary such as the Chesapeake. The Chesapeake has been, to some, a means of transportation; to some it has been a livelihood from shellfish or the fin fishery; to some it has been a means of transporting goods; to some it has been simply a study experience over which they can contemplate. But to all it has been a disposal.

We can do a lot of things in the process field to make sure the use of it as a disposal does not conflict with other uses of the Bay and its productivity. But we have to make the investment, and we have to take the courage; we can't do it by lip service. It has to be done with all the technology we can muster. Certainly, if we can send a crew into outer space, don't tell me we can't process the sewage from the City of Baltimore. Of course it can be done. It's when we put conservation on the same level of interest that we put space, or Medicare, or Social Security that we will make the investment and take the courage to do it.

I want to thank you for the work you are doing, and I want to offer my services to you in this field. If I can help bring this interest to a broader segment of our society, if I can just get somebody to get out of his car and pick up one beer can, I will have accomplished something.

Thank you very much.