

WILD-LIFE PROJECT CALLS FOR U. S. AID

New York Times

Use of Marginal Land Part of
Wide Program, Beck Tells
Game Conference.

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RESTORATION IS KEYNOTE

Plan, Viewed as Most Comprehensive in History, Goes Before Wallace Today.

With the emphatic declaration that "the time for conservation has passed, the time for restoration has come," Thomas H. Beck, chairman of the President's Committee on Wild Life, outlined to the delegates of the American Game Conference at the Hotel Pennsylvania yesterday the program for game preservation which will be submitted to Secretary of Agriculture Wallace today and then transmitted to Mr. Roosevelt.

In the first public statement on the aims of the committee, Mr. Beck sketched a tremendous undertaking calling for the use of at least one-third of the 50,000,000 acres of marginal land which the Department of Agriculture intends to purchase as part of its farm rehabilitation program.

The committee proposes that the land be used for breeding and nesting areas for migratory waterfowl. It will be, in the view of the majority of the 800 delegates who heard the proposal, the greatest restoration plan in the history of American wild life.

Says Money Is Available.

There is no necessity of waiting for legislation, Mr. Beck informed his hearers. Money for the purchase of the land has already been set aside and is in the hands of one of the government corporations.

All that is needed is that the Washington authorities be impressed with the importance and value of the undertaking, so that money will be made immediately available.

"The report of the committee will propose the restoration of migratory waterfowl nesting areas by the purchase of a large number of such areas in States where the birds naturally multiply if given proper environment and food," said Mr. Beck. "But this is not all. We will also propose a nation-wide upland game restoration program with specific projects."

Supporting Mr. Beck in pressing the urgency of action for waterfowl was Hoyer Lloyd, supervisor of wild life protection in Canada, who recounted the decline in the number of ducks in Central and Eastern Canada in the last few years, due to drought and the lack of feed. This lack of suitable food in the East had resulted in the flight of the birds toward the West Coast, whence reports of increased flights have come.

Dr. Bell Supports View.

Dr. W. B. Bell of the United States Biological Survey backed up the report of Mr. Lloyd on the decreased flights of waterfowl from Canada, extending, he said, over a period of four years.

Roble W. Tufts, federal migratory bird official of the Maritime Provinces, estimated the number of brant and Canadian geese in those Provinces last season as only 5 per cent of what it had been in normal conditions four years ago.

In telling of the committee's plans, only a part of which were made public, Mr. Beck asserted that there is evidence of a "continuing and critical" decline in the country's wild life resources, especially the migratory waterfowl.

This he attributed to the destruction and neglect of vast natural breeding and nesting places by drainage, the encroachment of agriculture and the failure of random schemes for checking the evils.

"There has been no evidence of any comprehensive and coordinated plan or effort to correct the situation," he said. "The plan to withdraw by purchase marginal lands unsuited for commercial agricultural uses affords an unusual opportunity, as does employment under the CWA, to carry out a comprehensive national program of restoration."

Seek Natural Conditions.

With the statement that his committee is simply seeking to restore things to their natural conditions, the chairman asked for the support of the Audubon Society and the Society of Mammalogists for the program.

"The committee," said Mr. Beck, "by mutual agreement has determined to omit from present consideration all highly controversial issues and to include restoration projects for all species, and to enlist the support and cooperation of all persons and organizations in the preservation and increase of wild life, rather than confine our report merely to game."

"At present, authority over wild-life protection is scattered through many departments and bureaus, and the principal authority, the Bureau of Biological Survey, is inadequately equipped and manned for a large administrative task."

"The President has ample authority under existing laws to consolidate departments and bureaus. Nothing contemplated in our report, so far as we know, will require legislation and therefore the plan, if approved, may be put into immediate execution."

Chief Points of Program.

The four-point program on which he and his associates, Professor Aldo Leopold and J. N. Darling, have agreed upon, was stated by Mr. Beck as follows:

First—Restoration of migratory waterfowl nesting places by purchase (one-year lease with option to buy to hasten possession) of a large number of areas. Cost of acquisition, restoration, including dams, dikes, &c., and management will be included.

Second—A nation-wide upland game restoration program with specific projects, costs, &c.

Third—A nation-wide plan for action involving the acquisition and restoration of areas suitable

for facilitating a prolific natural increase in the population of all wild life, especially those species which are becoming scarce.

Fourth—A proposal for a coordinated and businesslike administration to carry the plan into successful operation if and when the report is approved.

Leaves for Capital.

Mr. Beck left last night for Washington, where, with the other members of the committee, the final draft of the report will be made. It may be submitted to the President tomorrow following the convening of the Senate Committee on Wild Life for a hearing.

The plea made by the Wild Life Committee for the reclamation of unused lands received powerful support from William Lovell Finley of Portland, Ore., member of the Migratory Bird Advisory Board.

Citing Mr. Beck's remarks that "millions of acres of marsh and other sub-marginal land upon which hundreds of thousands of farmers are going broke trying to make a living would be of much more economic worth if retired to the public domain and nature aided in producing a crop of wild life thereon," Mr. Finley at once brought up the matter of the restoration of Malheur and Klamath Lake reservations in Southern Oregon. These, he said, should be restored for the "future of outdoor-loving America."

Mr. Finley said that "the schemes of land promoters and the ambitions of politicians" had turned what was once a paradise for wild life into a "desert waste of dry peat and alkali, for after the lakes had been drained it had been found that the land reclaimed was unsuitable for cultivation."

He traced the beginning of the destruction of bird life to thirty or forty years ago, when the "free land" craze was at its height.

Carp Menace to Wildfowl.

The work of building dikes and the removal by private interests of carp from ponds and inland water regions bordering Lake Erie and Lake Michigan were explained by David B. Day, president of the Ohio Marshowners Migratory Bird Conservation League.

"Carp are the greatest destroyers of wildfowl food ever introduced to all waters," he said. "By building dikes and letting the carp out into Lake Erie we have not only restored conditions as they were years ago before the introduction of the carp, but we have also raised the level of marshes several feet above the level of Lake Erie."

E. Milby Burton, director of the Charleston Museum, Charleston, S. C., estimated that wild duck along 125 miles of South Carolina coast have increased by about one-third this year, as compared with past years. He attributed this to conservative shooting, rehabilitation of old rye fields and protection before and after the shooting season.

If conditions over the whole continent were the same as those prevailing in South Carolina, he said, there would be no duck shortage.

Four hundred officials and delegates attended the conference's annual dinner last night. The speakers included former Postmaster General Harry S. New, Philip S. Rose and Mr. Lloyd. The toastmaster was Lithgow Osborne, New York State conservation commissioner.