

Found Game Wardens Allies of Poachers

Nixon Defends Dismissal of Officers, Claiming Better Enforcement — “Worst Slam,” Is Chal- lies’s Term

A STORM was precipitated at yesterday’s meeting of the Fish and Game Committee of the Legislature by J. W. Gravestock of Peterboro’.

Two Ministers Angered.

He scored both Administrations, past and present, and brought George H. Challies, ex-Minister, to his feet defending his efforts to improve the supply of muskellunge last year, and he brought Hon. Harry Nixon, present Minister, to his feet with the charge that “the dismissal of Game Wardens was the worst slam that has ever been delivered at conservation.”

“That is not true,” retorted Mr. Nixon. “We have more law enforcement officers than ever before and more Deputy Game Wardens than ever before. Records show that since we assumed office more informations have been laid, and more convictions registered than ever before, which in itself is convincing proof of better law enforcement.”

Dismissals Defended.

Mr. Nixon defending dismissals, said the department had found instances where Game Wardens under the old regime were in league with poachers. Regarding hatcheries, he said two would be built this year and more would be built as required.

Figures were here supplied by Deputy Minister D. J. Taylor, showing that a year ago there were 100 Superintendents and game overseers; today there were 69, plus 300 Provincial Police. A year ago there were 420 Deputy Game Wardens; now there were 552 and 100 traffic officers. The totals were 520 enforcement officers a year ago, while today there were 924 officers enforcing the law. Seizures increased 20 per cent. over last year; convictions increased 30 per cent., and fines were 45 per cent. in excess of a year ago.

To Make Reply.

Mr. Challies jumped to his feet. “This is not the place to have that sort of thing,” he said. “I will reply to the Deputy Minister on the floor of the House. I appeal to the Northern members. In the Northern Districts you have no protection. The Deputy Minister himself has been reported as saying there are 1,000 fur poachers in Chapleau.”

Mr. Nixon: “I’m going to ask that Mr. Challies withdraw or apologize to Mr. Taylor for that statement. He has never said there were 1,000 poachers in Chapleau!”

The Minister stood staring expectantly, but when Mr. Challies made no move to respond Mr. Nixon shrugged impatiently, and said: “Oh, let’s go on with the work of the committee.”

Rezoning Endorsed.

Rezoning of Ontario for both fish and game-hunting regulation was generally endorsed. The session was particularly devoted to fish, although a breeze sprang up regarding the suggestion of permitting the use of dogs in running deer.

Earlier opening of the speckled trout season found little favor, but there seemed a consensus in favor of an earlier closing, namely, Sept. 1, instead of Sept. 15.

Delegations from near and far, a widespread representation of the whole Province, were there to air their views. Today’s sitting of the committee will tackle game-hunting.

Much of yesterday’s discussion centred on game wardens. Thomas Barnes of Hamilton, President of the Ontario Federation of Anglers, opened the subject, voicing both praise and mild criticism. The present arrangement was good, he said, but might be more effective if fire rangers were also authorized to act as game wardens, supplementing the service in the back reaches.

Wild Life Study.

He advocated rezoning and more intensive promotion of muskellunge propagation, with some waters absolutely closed, and that an Advisory Committee on Wild Life Conservation, composed of experienced biologists, naturalists, anglers and huntsmen, be created to act with the department in an educative campaign.

Dr. A. B. James of Toronto enlarged on “zoning.” The fact that Ontario had virtually semi-tropical conditions in Essex and almost continuous arctic conditions in the north made for varied seasonal conditions that required a variety of regulations.

E. L. Hughes, representing the Tourist Association of North Bay, pleaded for a hatchery for pickerel and lake trout in the Nipissing area. The fry for replanting were now transported too great a distance, and many died on the way or arrived in no condition to ensure their survival. The ideal arrangement would be four hatcheries for the district, one each at North Bay, Sudbury, New Liskeard and Cochrane. He suggested closing two small lakes tributary to Lake Penage as sanctuaries for the perpetual restocking of Penage; and he protested the practice of allowing commercial fishermen to set nets within three miles of the mouth of the Bad River, thus preventing the run of pickerel ultimately reaching the French River.

To Halt Practice.

D. J. Taylor, Deputy Minister of Game and Fisheries, assured the speaker that this practice of the past would not be permitted this year.

Mr. Hughes condemned the \$1 three-day and \$5 season license for non-residents, and recommended a straight \$3 license, with an extra \$2 license if the visitors desired to take fish out of the country. He approved the \$8 family license for non-residents.

The Deputy Minister here interjected that the non-resident family license would be retained, and the \$5 (or \$3 and \$2) fee for tourists be deemed a good suggestion.

The North Bay man strongly objected to a Sept. 1 closing of the trout season for the North. “Make it Sept. 30 for the sake of the tourist business,” he said. “If you take the tourist out of Northern Ontario—boys, I tell you we’ll all be down here on relief!”

L. J. Hughson of Nakina differed on the ground of conservation. “Ninety per cent. of the trout caught in Northern Ontario after Sept. 1 are females,” he said.

H. H. Mackay, biologist of the department, told of progress being made with regard to the hatching and rearing of muskellunge. The chief difficulty to overcome was cannibalism. The fish were voracious eaters and preyed particularly upon their own kind. The best method of development was to protect them during the

spawning season in their own element. But operations would be continued in the line of artificial rearing.

Other Speakers.

Other speakers were: H. Nicholson, St. Catharines; Paul Martin, Windsor, representing commercial fishermen of that area; Harold Cairns, Toronto; A. J. Wagg, Manitoulin; A. S. Brown, Kingsville; Frank Cooper, Toronto, and Mr. Thorne of Rice Lake district.

An important announcement was made by Deputy Minister Taylor: that any farmer, or group of farmers, having a good stream and desirous of making a little revenue from it, would be supplied free trout for stocking and the farmer or farmers would be permitted to charge a fee to the public who wished to fish. The only stipulation was that the farmer should treat all sportsmen alike, with no discrimination.

Members of the committee and delegates were invited by Dr. James to attend a special lecture on wild life in Algonquin Park, by F. McDougall, Superintendent of the park, in Forsters’ Hall, College Street, tonight.