

# NATURALIST IS *Marshfield, Ore., News.* MAIN SPEAKER AT LEAGUE MEET

*Apr. 21, 1939*  
The present dam-building rush in Pacific coast states may react to our disadvantage, declared William Finley, Portland naturalist, told members of Coos County Waltonians assembled in annual banquet here Friday evening. Unless, the speaker declared, there is a better thought out program of conservation presented.

"The forests are the mother of our country. They store up water. They prevent erosion and flood, but today right here in Oregon we sadly need a program of tax revision to protect those who hold forest lands. We must protect both the men and the forests."

Speaking of streams, Finley said, "Streams have many uses, but what worries me is that one use is destroying all the other uses. Pollution caused by the various commercial uses of our streams is destroying the fish through the depletion of oxygen."

Finley recalled that army engineers he consulted in Washington, D. C., admitted that in the study of plans for flood control and power dams, cost and location alone were considered. The elements of fish, wild life, recreation or actual need were minor matters in these reports. One interest and one purpose

must not be allowed to overshadow all else, Finley said, having in mind the wild life resources which just now are a valuable asset in attracting the eastern tourists.

The banquet was presided over by Charles Fox, the chapter president, who stated the chapter's immediate goals are: securing appointment of a local man on the game commission; construction of a game fowl refuge on the coast for migratory waterfowl; development of the Smith Basin hatchery and the Bandon hatchery; conversion of Eel Lake into a brood lake; and creation of a friendly relationship with the game commission.

Other speakers, among whom were Frank B. Wire, game commission member, and James Gerow, federal game management director for Oregon, were introduced by J. Stanley Emery, the president of the State Walton League.

Also listed among the dinner speakers was William Smith of Portland, president of the Oregon branch of the Wildlife Federation of America.

Three reels of moving pictures depicting various phases of the state fish and game commission activities, were shown by Mr. Wire.

## High Cost of River Projects

To the Editor: Since the house rivers and harbors committee has recently approved a bill to authorize construction at Umatilla rapids of another dam on the Columbia river, the question arises as to whether congress should appropriate \$23,700,000 for this project. The main cause advanced by engineers and promoters is inland waterway transportation. Since all federal funds have to be taken from the taxpayers' pockets, will this additional indebtedness be a gain or a loss? What are the real facts behind this project?

Inland waterway transportation does not relate to ocean harbors or large rivers where the water is naturally deep enough for ships. It applies to improvement and maintenance of up-river channels at public expense for the free use of shippers. Federal expenditures up to June 30, 1937, for the development of inland waterways amounted to \$2,186,000,000. According to these figures and the amount of freight moved, transportation on these waterways is far more expensive than by land.

Years ago the state of New York spent \$346,000,000 in building state barge canals to foster inland waterway transportation. As a result it cost the taxpayer \$4.51 per ton for all freight floated on the canals. The Empire state officials proved that it would have been cheaper for the state if all of this freight had been put into railroad cars and the state had paid the freight bill.

The most amazing example of inland waterway transportation is the amount of money this nation has spent on the Missouri river between St. Louis and Sioux City. It is almost \$100,000,000. This is through a well populated country, yet all freight moved has cost the taxpayers from \$1000 to \$5000 per ton.

The increased spending of federal funds has opened up the widest campaign through this nation, which is captained by local pressure groups. They try to rule the congressmen, and succeed in many cases. The more the government spends on local problems, the greater is the gain for shrewd exploiters. They reap the harvest. The taxpayers take the loss.

Now what is the status of this promotion plan to build more dams on the Columbia river so as to fur-

nish business for boats and barges? The government has already lifted over \$12,000,000 from the taxpayers' pockets to advance inland waterway transportation at Cascade Locks, Celilo canal, and to deepen the channel of the river above The Dalles. Practically all of this money was spent years ago. Not a single promoter of these schemes would dare publish the cost of freight tonnage up to date.

If we take the cost of the new proposed dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers, also take the top figures of the promoters for tonnage that may be moved, the taxpayers will pay an average of about \$50 per ton. There is no greater example of pork-barrel legislation in the United States. If this inland waterway policy could be changed, the United States would save \$100,000,000 a year.

Herbert G. West, executive vice-president of the Inland Empire Waterways association, says the Umatilla dam would force down freight rates. Suppose these subsidies from the taxpayers' pockets do lower the rate 10 per cent. The same subsidies to the railroads would lower it 20 per cent.

Why should the taxpayers of this nation pay \$50 a ton for boats and barges to haul freight on the Columbia? If local projects deserve federal contributions, they certainly deserve some local funds. This would stop all of these pressure groups boosting the government indebtedness. Private individuals couldn't keep bleeding the taxpayers.

If the fight is against the railroad rates, these are regulated through federal control. There can be no freight rate monopolies, because the country is lined with highways filled with competitive truck lines. Our citizens should remember that last year the railroads paid \$341,000,000 in taxes and the owners took a loss of \$123,000,000.

Next comes the real reason why the business men and taxpayers should ask our representatives in congress why they are trying to endanger one of the greatest industries of the northwest? The fish resources of the Columbia river belong to the people. This is a \$200,000,000 wild-life resource that cannot survive if the great river has its whole biological conditions changed. WILLIAM L. FINLEY.

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**Audubon Dinner Planned**—The John James Audubon birthday dinner for the Oregon Audubon society and friends will be held Thursday at 6:30 P. M. at the Bohemian restaurant, with William L. Finley, naturalist and honorary president of the society, as toastmaster. Other speakers will be W. H. Crowell, Miss Arlie Seaman and W. A. Elliot. Part of the program will be presented by the Lucy Audubon club.