

Assault on Yellowstone

"It hardly seems possible that Congress will give the State of Montana a portion of Yellowstone National Park but that is just what H.R.6975 would permit," declares Dr. Preston Bradley, Chicago, past president and now president emeritus of the Izaak Walton League.

Introduced by Congressman O'Connor of Montana, the bill proposes to take certain lands now within the boundaries of Yellowstone and convey all the right, title and interest of the United States in and to such lands to the State of Montana.

The House Committee on Public Lands has favorably reported out the bill, accompanying it with a letter from Secretary of the Interior Ives advising against enactment of the bill on the ground that the area is of national park caliber, that it is needed for protection of wildlife, and that "it is being put to the best possible use for the benefit of the nation as a whole."

"Unfamiliar though we are with the motives back of H.R.6975, we resent this attempted raid on the first and greatest of our national parks," Dr. Bradley continues. "The argument sometimes raised of returning needed lands to the state does not obtain in this case for Yellowstone Park was created and its boundaries established before the State of Montana, as such, existed. Passage of the bill would in fact be giving to Montana for undisclosed purposes part of the land dedicated by Congress in 1872 as a "Public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."

Write your congressmen and senators and urge them to vote against this vicious bill.

o o o o o o o o o

Flood Control Dams Spell Ruin for Salmon Industry

"With completion of the flood control project on the Willamette river in Oregon, the Columbia river salmon industry faces well nigh complete ruination," according to William L. Finley of Portland, noted naturalist and national vice president of the Izaak Walton League.

"The Chinook Salmon runs of the Columbia river represent the most valuable fish resources in America -- perhaps in the world. As a food supply they represent an industry of more than 10 million dollars annually, supporting thousands of families, and this in spite of the fact that the runs have been gradually decreasing on the upper Columbia, where dams, pollution and irrigation ditches have raised so much havoc as to make the industry on that part of the river almost a memory.

"The best remaining spawning area is the tributary, the Willamette, which is apparently doomed to go the same route, all in the name of flood control, in order to obtain federal pork monies, largely at the expense of the more populous states, to the tune of more than 100 million dollars, and to add to the fast growing number of aquatic monstrosities being heaped upon the nation.

"To justify the project on the grounds that it will protect farmers and other land owners along the river from being damaged by flood waters doesn't make sense. The Engineers' study indicated that the largest reported floods on the upper

Willamette occurred during December 1861, January 1881 and February 1890 - all during winter months. Floods on the main stream usually occur between November and March, the main flood water below Oregon City being back-water from annual freshets on the Columbia and therefore having nothing to do with the upper Willamette. Since floods in the Willamette Valley come during the winter months, how can there be damage to farm crops?

"From time immemorial we know that river bottoms regularly covered with silt make the richest land for agriculture and that on flats covered with rich, sandy loam without effort or expense on his part the farmer produces his largest and finest crop.

"If their honest opinion was asked, the farmers and bona fide landowners of the Willamette Valley did not start this agitation for flood control and do not want it. It is indeed high time that the taxpayers of the nation found out and called a halt."

Mr. Finley will ask for League action on the project at the National Convention to be held at the Congress Hotel, Chicago, March 28, 29 and 30, at which time Secretary of the Interior Ickes is expected to answer some of the League's criticism of governmental policies with particular reference to the disregard for public aquatic resources.

o o o o o o o o o o o

Guts

Don't be shocked. It is a good, old-fashioned, homely Anglo-Saxon word, denoting courage, independence, resolution.

The cause of conservation is, to a large extent, dependent upon public laws. These laws, for their administration and enforcement, are dependent upon various agencies such as public officials, boards, commissions, courts. Many times and in many situations the fate of conservation lies in the hands of these agencies. Laws may be ever so good but they are not, as a rule, self-administering or self-executing. They are not automatic. In the last analysis, they are dependent on the personal element.

When any person or any group of persons find themselves in a position where their action or decision involves the public good, courage, fortitude, resolution -- guts are just as essential as they are in the soldier on the firing line. Vacillation, cowardice, irresolution, treachery on their part are just as reprehensible as is desertion on the part of the soldier. They hold in their hands the welfare of the public just as truly as does the soldier. For courageous action they should receive just as great honor, praise and even glory. The battle field is not the only stage for bravery.

Let all conservationists and all such agencies realize these truths. They may be homely, trite and commonplace but nevertheless worthy to be constantly in mind. It is not essential that such agencies controlling the destiny of conservation should be inspired with a fierce, crusading militancy. Indeed, it would be highly improper but, none the less, when situations arise in which these agencies, be they high or low, hold in their hands the fate of any phase of conservation, the public welfare demands that they have the guts.

As the soldier may be called upon to sacrifice his life, even so these agencies may be called upon to make serious sacrifices. Our government is so organized that this is inevitable. But there is a corresponding duty of the great body of conservationists in this country to back to the limit every such agency or person con-