

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

Journal
Communications to The Journal for publication in this department should be written on only one side of the paper, should not exceed 300 words in length, and must be signed by the writer, whose mail address must accompany the contribution.

Aug. 3, '35

THE MALHEUR BIRD REFUGE

This Writer Raises Questions in Respect of the Relative Values of That Area as Between Refuge and Range.

Portland, July 31.—To the Editor of The Journal—Referring to the article by William L. Finley in The Journal of July 30, it seems that some of the facts relating to the recent activities in the name of conservation of migratory birds in Oregon might well be brought to the public attention. I hold no special brief for B. E. Hayden, superintendent of the Klamath reclamation project, or for the reclamation service generally, but I have had opportunity to observe some of the activities of the biological survey, and some of the works of the reclamation service.

Mr. Finley says the small fees (amounting to some \$3106.40 annually) received from grazing off "our" sanctuary, do not compensate for the destruction of bird life; that he saw in one flock 2600 sheep grazing within the refuge. How many terns, gulls and pelicans would he consider the monetary equivalent of 2600 sheep and the wool they produce each year, and how many Canadian geese, if any, nest in Oregon? With rare exceptions, do not Canadian geese nest far north of Oregon, and stop in this state a few days only, during spring and fall migrations?

If dead tule is not burned off each year, but accumulates over long periods, it is a fire hazard of first magnitude, and if fire once starts in such areas of accumulated tules, it is practically impossible to control, and such a burned-over area is utterly worthless for waterfowl or any other purpose for many years thereafter.

As to the drying up of lakes in Eastern Oregon as a result of reclamation service activities, what about Harney and Malheur lakes, diminished from some 82,000 acres to zero in 30 years. There is no reclamation project within miles of either, or of the streams that feed them, but they have dried up just the same. May not the unprecedented lack of rainfall in Eastern Oregon during 20 years have had some effect upon the lakes in Klamath county, as on Malheur and Harney lakes? Before this drouth period, 40,000 cattle were wintered annually on forage in the western end of the bed of Malheur lake. Due to drouth conditions, it is doubtful if there are now 20,000 head of cattle in all of Harney county. Is the reclamation service to blame for this also?

Since the Malheur bird refuge was created, in 1908, the population and value of products from the vicinity of Malheur lake have decreased at least 50 per cent. During the same period, as a result of reclamation, the population and wealth of the Klamath country have increased many-fold.

C. W. Peore.

Oregonian Replies In Salmon Debate.

Washington Post Aug. 15, '35
To the Editor of The Post—Sir: My attention has been called to an editorial in your issue of July 25, entitled "Salmon and Dams." In this, you gave the figures in an article I wrote for Nature Magazine to the effect that the annual income from the salmon fisheries of the Columbia River is between \$10,000,000 and \$12,000,000, or the equivalent of a 5 per cent return on a \$200,000,000 investment.

In your issue of July 28, you publish a letter by John W. Kelly stating that the income from the salmon industry is not this large. My figures are conservative. Dr. L. E. Griffin, of Reed College, in the Literary Digest of August 3, says the annual value of the Columbia River salmon is \$15,000,000.

Mr. Kelly states that our concern in saving the Columbia River salmon is only a smoke screen because the Federal Government is entering the hydroelectric field. This is untrue, and he knows it. He knows we have been fighting various power companies for years to get adequate fishways over their dams. We need electrical energy to build up this country, but we also need food. Why do power companies take possession of our best salmon spawning streams when there are other streams and many places where electricity can be produced?

The Columbia River has produced and is producing more salmon than any other stream in the world. The spring run of fish can not survive unless they can get to the spawning beds and the fingerlings return safely to the ocean. Nature has bestowed this \$200,000,000 gift upon the people of the country. Once destroyed, it can not be replaced. Mr. Kelly and

others should keep in mind that there are no mortgages upon this investment. No taxes are levied upon the citizens of the United States to keep up this industry.

We already have one big dam in the Columbia River at Rock Island. The fishway installed when this dam was built is inadequate for the salmon, and another is now being built. The Government allotted \$31,000,000 for the Bonneville Dam and at first set aside only \$800,000 for fishways, which was \$4,200,000 short of what fish experts asked to protect the salmon. It took a lot of fighting to get the present allotment of \$3,200,000. No one yet knows whether this fund is sufficient, as all the plans are not completed to guard the interests of the fish. Problems of this magnitude have never been met before, and they need considerable study.

The Government has given \$61,000,000 for another big dam further up the Columbia at the Grand Coulee. On account of its great height, engineers claim that fishways are impractical. Therefore no funds have been allotted, but a large hatchery is to be built there.

The Pacific Northwest is rich in natural resources and nothing will stop its development. However, too often a gift of nature is unnecessarily destroyed. Some of the most difficult problems we have are weighing the public values of a natural resource in comparison with some new change promoted by man. It is always good business to first figure any losses, then count the costs with interest and try to get a clear picture of the final results.

WILLIAM L. FINLEY.

Portland, Oreg., Aug. 9.

Liberated Deer In Crook County Dashes to Woods

Prineville, Or., Aug. 24.—Officialdom of the United States government and the state of Oregon dropped regular tasks yesterday to rescue a deer which had fallen into a 15-foot shaft on the John Knox farm in Canut basin. It was first reported a doe, but the rescuers found it was a buck whose velvet horns had been broken in the fall. Presumably he had been chased into the well by coyotes. Knox threw hay to the animal,

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which had spent perhaps three days in the hole, and it was in good condition when it was drawn up. As soon as released it made a dash for the woods, without even a deer gesture which might be interpreted as thank you. Knox chanced onto the animal, otherwise it probably would have starved.

Participating in the rescue were Lester Moncrief, superintendent of the Ochocho national forest; George E. Griffith of the Portland district forest office, J. C. Miller of the state police and W. L. Finley.

Old Wilderness Would Be Kept Intact by Group

Aug. 23, '35

The Oregon Wilderness society, a new organization whose object is preservation of wilderness areas in their natural state, will meet Tuesday at noon in the Chamber of Commerce to elect permanent officers, it was announced yesterday by Captain Alfred P. Kelley, U. S. army, retired.

Captain Kelley was chosen at a recent meeting as temporary chairman. John B. Yeon is temporary treasurer, and Will R. Lewis temporary secretary.

The Wilderness society, Captain Kelley said, hopes to co-operate with the United States forest service to preserve wilderness areas so that present and future generations may know the primeval forest formerly typical of western America.

William L. Finley, Jacob G. Kamm, Kenneth Beebe, L. Bernard MacNab and O. C. Roehr were reported to have expressed interest in the society.