

Legislature Certain to Have 'Game' Diet Next Month, Whether or No

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By Ralph Watson

"Game," that staple diet of every legislative session since the second generation of Oregon pioneers outgrew their barefoot days and discarded their bent pins and angleworms for barbed hooks, dry flies and waders, once more seems scheduled to be served a la carte during the coming session of the assembly.

The feast, as usual, is to be highly seasoned with political tobacco and various factional condiments, with the chefs, self-appointed and otherwise, each armed with his favorite brand and vociferous in his contention that unless it alone be used the dish will be totally ruined, an affront to the palate and a distress to the digestion.

Republican Condiment Annoys One Commissioner

Commissioner Lew Wallace, for instance, is much disturbed because not enough Democratic pepper is being employed by the game commission in its current stew. The fact that a few Republican grains of that seasoning still can be seen here and there with the naked eye destroys his official appetite and gives him the colic.

William L. Finley, Ed. F. Averill and other experts of the Izaak Walton school of piscatorial preparation are more than insistent that the frequent replacement of old commissioners with new makes a raw dish. And so it goes.

The primary reason for the impending wrangle is politics and patronage. Practically every other cause of conflict radiates from that central source of infection.

A long time ago, back in the days when Ben W. Olcott was governor and the control of commercial fish-

ing was tied up in the same package with game fish and game, the legislature divorced the two and created the state fish commission giving it jurisdiction over commercial fishing and the state game commission giving it control of the conservation and propagation of wild game and game fish. That arrangement, it was thought at the time, would bring some measure of peace and harmony. It did, for a time and to a certain extent.

In 1935 the legislature barely had started rolling along when Governor Martin suddenly heaved the entire game commission out of office and replaced it with an entirely new set of commissioners, appointing C. E. Riley, Klamath Falls, to serve to February 25, 1936; George Aikin of Ontario to serve to February 25, 1937; Dexter Rice, Roseburg to February, 1938; E. E. Wilson, Corvallis to February, 1939, and Lew Wallace, Portland, to February, 1940.

Wallace at the time was a member of the Multnomah house delegation, which fact cost him his legislative seat in the 1935 special session. During the controversy over that issue he resigned from the commission, but was later restored to his post by subsequent reappointment.

From the first Wallace became a storm center on the commission, and has continued to be until the present. He started out to make the commission's office and field personnel 100 per cent. Democratic. Incidental to this he took a "political census" of the employes and has been working assiduously to get all Republicans out and all Democrats in. On this, and other administration affairs, the commission has divided three to two; Aikin, Rice and Wilson standing on one side, with Wallace and Riley on the other.

As the Wind Blows

Wallace, so the story runs, wants to get rid of Frank Wire, state game supervisor and of Matt Ryckman, superintendent of hatcheries. Both are veterans in the service of the commission and both are Republicans. Wallace now is waiting as patiently as may be for the term of Commissioner Aikin to terminate on February 25, next, in the hope that he will be replaced by some one who will line up with him and Commissioner Riley, thus giving those three the command of the commission and Wallace his long awaited opportunity to "clean house" through the discharge of Wire, Ryckman and any other lesser employes who may be registered as Republicans.

Both Wire and Ryckman are recognized as experienced and capable in their respective positions, and both have held back from discharging efficient employes for political cause, in which they have been supported by Aikin, Rice and Wilson.

Wallace already has his successor to Wire picked out, so it is understood, in the person of Charles Leach, member of the 1935 sessions and returned for another term at the recent election. Preparatory to moving Leach into the game supervisor's berth, Wallace has been "building" Leach up, having forced, or at least secured, his appointment upon the advisory committee of wild life conservation, and the committee on stream pollution, of the state planning board. In view of these circumstances Wallace does not want any change in the present commission set up, other than the retirement of Aikin and the appointment of a successor whose mind will run along with his.

Staggered Commission Sought

Finley and Averill are the spear points of the Oregon Wild Life federation and have been working along with the state planning board in its surveys, through the wild life conservation and stream pollution advisory committees.

For the last two sessions of the legislature Averill and his group have attempted to secure a "staggered" commission set-up for the game group, their objective as they set it out to be the elimination of partisan and political interference in the conduct of the commission. The commission is staggered at the present time, but not enough to suit. Each commissioner serves for a five-year term, and one term expires each year, but their appointments come solely at the nod of the governor and may be taken away in the same manner at any time.

The Finley-Averill forces have contended that the various sportsmen's organizations and groups and designated individuals should be given the task of "recommending" candidates to the governor for appointment, and that the governor be limited to these recommendees in his selection of a commissioner. That scheme, they believe, would take the politics out of the commission.

Natural Resources Sidetracked

Apparently there is to be no attempt to graft a proposed "department of natural resources" upon the governmental "cabinet" which the interim commission on government reorganization has been shaping up in co-operation with the planning board. That was one of the seven departments set up in the D. O. Hood cabinet government bill at the 1935 session. But the planning board and the interim commission has come to the conclusion that it would be better to feed the cabinet idea to the legislature in smaller bites, so intend to confine their recommendations to the establishment of a department of finance and another department of social welfare. The ultimate establishment of a cabinet government can be accomplished by sticking to the doctrine of accretion, they believe, and point to the creation of the department of agriculture, and the department of state police, already set up and functioning.

Of course, what Wallace wants, and don't want, on his part or what the Finley-Averill group wants or doesn't want on its side do not include all the wants and don't wants. There is to be a "big mass meeting of conservationists" in Portland between New Years and the opening of the legislature at which the Wild Life federation will set its wants and don't wants up in concrete form for presentation to the legislature.

Changes Recommended

And lastly, which is administrative and not part of the political phase of the situation, the state game supervisor has made a few recommendations to the commission in regard to desired changes in the present game code, partly as follows:

Repeal antelope law; make bear a game animal in entire state; pass law prohibiting the working of bird dogs from March 15 to July 1; pass law giving game commission right of condemnation along shore lines of streams and points of access; give game commission authority to make openings and closings due to emergency by posting notice for three days; regulation of mining operations along streams; regulation of motor boats on certain waters; revision of game tagging law; revision of trapping and fur dealers regulations.

Pass legislation requiring elk hunters to check in and out; revise law on stream pollution; pass legislation requiring justices of peace to turn over fine money within certain time; charge fee for permits issued for holding deer; revise law so as to allow two blades on spinners in rivers, and clarify beaver law.

Amend law allowing commission at its discretion to make bag limit for elk read "one elk"; amend deer law so as to allow commission at its discretion to sell permits to kill does; repeal law providing for closed season on pigeons and doves; pass law requiring revoking of licenses for game law violations; also confiscation of hunting or angling equipment.

There is no provision in present law regarding holding of predatory animals in captivity other than coyotes. It should cover others, particularly cougar and cats; revise boundary lines of Multnomah-Clackamas reserve; also Canyon creek reserve to make more definite.

To conserve the rapidly diminishing salmon species and to save most of the steelhead trout taken commercially at the present time it is suggested that the commercial fishing season be closed from December 1 to May 1, each year.

Reduction and elimination as far as possible of pollution of streams by industrial and municipal wastes.

Providing that the state game commission may make appearance in court proceedings or hearings without payment of filing fees to other state agencies in protesting the granting of water rights.

Restriction on the right to file upon or use more than two thirds of the minimum flow of any stream of this state until a study of this stream has been made by the state game commission or the state fish commission of the need for continuation of flow to preserve fish life and the relative value of fish life in this stream to proposed improvements or other use of the water.

In view of the fact that the method of logging known as splash dam logging destroys all life in the stream, it should be strictly regulated if not prohibited altogether.

Legislation for the conservation of water for multiple use purposes—mining, fishing, etc.

Limited license law be enacted similar to the laws now in effect in Utah for big game control.

The state game commission and the forest service should definitely study the Davis creek area in Deschutes county to inventory the number and range of white-tail deer and the area should be made a state game refuge.

Counties should be given the right to reserve easements for public recreation use across lands conveyed by counties.

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