

Democrat Herald #5/39

Finley Urges Cautious Study Of River Projects; Questions High Dams Under Valley Plan

While he is not opposed to flood control, power and irrigation projects, William L. Finley, nationally famed naturalist, advised extreme caution and study over every project lest the benefits it bestows are offset by the harm that it may do, speaking before the Albany Chamber of Commerce at the Albany hotel today.

Mr. Finley made particular reference to the Willamette valley project, warning that in many cases irrigation projects constructed by the government have cost far more than the returns have justified and have figuratively left the taxpayers of the nation "holding the sack." He spoke also of inland waterway development as a questionable policy, remarking that water transportation has become antiquated at many points by the growing network of highways and railroads.

The Willamette valley project, Mr. Finley said, has been studied only from the engineering standpoint, and its many other angles are yet to be worked out. Not until they are thoroughly explored should the vast amount of money necessary to bring it to completion be expended.

Particularly did Mr. Finley question the advisability of the proposal for high dams in the Santiam fork and McKenzie valleys.

"I am afraid they would destroy

some of the most beautiful country we have," the speaker warned.

"We need more study; we need more facts, and we need facts to follow the facts we have," Mr. Finley declared, regarding the entire state industrial and wild life program.

"When we have these we will have the greatest state in the union and I hope that is what we

He would not have the state's industrial and commercial growth impeded by wildlife conservation, but he would have wild life preserved along with the promotion of industry, the speaker said, and all of this requires diligent study and scientific co-ordination.

It is regrettable, Mr. Finley pointed out for example, that at the present time the equivalent of 75 farms of 160 acres each are being washed from the Willamette valley into the sea. Nevertheless, he asserted, flood control is accomplished not only by the building of dams, but also by the preservation of forests.

Legislation favoring forest preservation has been only recently enacted, he said, and there is still more work to be done along this line that the timber resources may be converted into wealth without destroying watersheds.

As another example Mr. Finley cited the draining of lakes and swamps. This practice, while reclaiming land for agriculture, has too often defeated its own end by lowering the water table and rendering other land less usable, also incurring greater costs for wells in adjacent territory, besides depriving fish, game and fur bearing animals of refuge.

Elimination of pollution was stressed by Mr. Finley as a necessary undertaking in Oregon.

"The rivers belong to the public as sources of food supply and as havens of recreation" the naturalist said, "as well as to provide water power, irrigation and transportation."

"We must, then, be careful lest the use for one purpose destroy its value for another."

"It is not right that our streams should be converted into open sewers. But pollution has crept upon us and the problem we now face is how to eliminate it and how to meet the costs."

"Pollution is a detriment to the health of the people and is must be corrected."

Fred Duncan, chairman of the membership committee, reported 30 new members with two or three committees yet to report. Attending were a number of members of the Santiam Fish and Game association; Ed Wilson of Corvallis, a member of the state game commission; J. R. Bruckert, supervisor of the Willamette national forest; H. G. White, assistant supervisor from Eugene office; R. C. Burgess, chief ranger at Cascadia.

A. A. Tussing of Halsey; Bert Morris of Portland; Mrs. W. L. Finley of Portland and Mrs. U. G. Smith, Tangent, president of the state garden clubs.

The speaker was introduced by M. O. Wilkinson, secretary of the Santiam Fish and Game association. Walter Kropp, president of the chamber, presided.

The table decorations were arranged by Mrs. O. P. Romaine, and the Albany Floral company, of which she is one of the proprietors, presented each member of the audience with a red carnation.

Careful Scrutiny Of Dam Projects Urged by Finley

Journal - Apr. 6, 1939
ALBANY, April 6.—William L. Finley, nationally famed naturalist, advised extreme caution and study over every project of flood control, power and irrigation lest the benefits it bestows are offset by the harm it may do, when he spoke before the Albany Chamber of Commerce Wednesday. He said he was not opposed to the projects.

Finley made particular reference to the Willamette valley project, warning that in many cases irrigation projects constructed by the government have cost far more than the returns have justified, and have figuratively left taxpayers to "hold the sack."

Particularly did Finley question the advisability of high dams in the Santiam fork and McKenzie valleys. He said he felt the dams would destroy some of the most beautiful country we have.

Elimination of pollution of streams and rivers was stressed by Finley as a necessary undertaking. He declared pollution a detriment to health of the people.