

Position of Eddy Survey Defended

Editor's Note: Corlett, well-known Idaho political writer, presents his views in the following article. Like other writers of signed articles, Mr. Corlett presents his own opinions and not necessarily those of the Tribune.

By JOHN CORLETT

BOISE—About two months ago, Eddie Pedersen of Idaho Falls, president of the Bonneville County Sportsmen's Association, made a statement in Lewiston in which he favored appropriation of funds for engineering studies of the proposed Bruces Eddy Dam on the Clearwater River.

To some wildlifers this was heresy because the word had gone out across the nation that Bruces Eddy would do everything from destroy "the nation's biggest elk herd" to wipe out a salmon population.

Several members of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, which earlier and gone on record as being opposed to Bruces Eddy Dam, wanted to call a director's meeting to ask Pedersen to give an account of his statement.

Pedersen, incidentally, made his statement after he looked over the Clearwater drainage and viewed the Bruces Eddy Dam site first hand.

Instead of a directors' meeting being called, Pedersen wrote a letter to Theo. H. Wegener, president of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, from which the following is excerpted:

"As we both learned many years ago, it is always possible to take statements, written or oral, out of their original context and very easily create illusions that seem to have a basic fact. And so, instead of trying to explain, clarify or enlarge upon anything that I may have said, I shall attempt to make some basic points that can be used for the record and which can also be used as a reference point for anyone who wishes to pick up any of our statements at random and get an honest feel for what we mean.

"1. We are dedicated to the practice of conservation as it has been advocated by our Federation. This means we fully recognize the value of a large group of organized sportsmen who can act as a united force to promote and protect our natural resources in general and our fish and wildlife in particular. . . . We are extremely proud of our Federation and the many years of progress we have made as a team.

"2. We are dedicated to those Democratic processes that are normally called the American way of life. This means we will go along with the decisions that

have been reached through proper democratic processes. This means we will do all in our power to present factual data for consideration and denounce data that are not factual. In our opinion, the shortest road to dictatorship is that road made by selfish, narrow-minded pressure groups who are willing to go to any extreme to achieve a goal that perhaps may not be good for even a very small minority.

"3. We are dedicated to the philosophy that honesty is the best policy. This means we insist that the spokesman for groups with which we are associated utilize only factual information in defending our stand on controversial subjects. . . . It means that we strongly object to the drawing of fictitious game distribution maps and giving them wide publicity as authentic and official publications. Further, it means that we strongly object to such tactics as calling a mountain gorge a green mountain valley.

"4. We are dedicated to the belief that America and Idaho have and should have a tremendous growth potential, and that real progress takes place only through the intelligent manipulation of existing resources. This means that if problems are attacked in an intelligent manner, the improvement of one resource can almost always result in a net improvement to all others. . . .

"I should like to record some facts relative to our statements about Bruces Eddy Dam:

"1. At no time have we advocated the building of Bruces Eddy Dam.

"2. We have advocated the spending of money for engineering studies. This is not contrary to the official stand of the Federation. . . .

"3. We have learned that our 'dam-building enemies' are actually more interested in over-all development of our resources than for which we give them credit.

If we enter into an honest and intelligent discussion concerning losses to our fish and wildlife, both past and potential, we will find them more than willing to help us enhance this part of our resources.

"4. We have made apologies for assisting in promulgation of false data on game distribution. . . . We feel ashamed that we, as an association, were stupid enough to not double check our data before using it. We regret that we did not have the intelligence to sit down in an open planning session, with all inter-

ested parties present, and objectively study the Bruces Eddy proposal along with alternate proposals. We regret that we have traveled a road that could end in real damage to things even more basic than fish and deer and elk."

There is a statement that speaks for itself and it also answers a column this reporter wrote some time ago in which he also questioned the "propaganda" tactics of certain of the extreme wildlifers.

Eddie Pedersen had his eyes opened and he is to be complimented for his stand in seeking to correct false data and impressions. His is a courageous statement seeking to get at the truth and in the end truth will prevail.