

State Wildlife Group Opposes Demands Stronger Dredging C

BOISE (AP)—The Idaho Wildlife Federation Sunday voted to oppose "forcefully" construction of two dams on the Clearwater River and to seek a strong dredge control law on the 1954 ballot.

The closing session of the federation's annual convention also heard Bruce Bowler, Boise, chairman of the stream pollution committee, charge that mining, timber and business interests scuttled a pollution bill in the last Legislature after first supporting it.

Frank Cullin and Frank Evans, Coeur d'Alene; Morton Brigham, Lewiston, and Mark Shelman, Bonners Ferry, presented the case of North Idaho sportsmen against the Army Engineers' proposal to build dams at Penny Cliffs and Bruce's Eddy.

Cullin attacked the proposals, saying more dams would follow and ruin the primitive area. Brigham declared their construction would ruin winter range for elk and leave sportsmen with "nothing but squawfish" to catch in the Clearwater.

Procedure Attacked

Delegates passed two companion resolutions: (1) decrying the Engineers' "deadly violation of democratic procedures," and asking Congress to "void" hearings on the dam proposals held at Orofino; and (2) asking congressional assurance that future hearings would be held in a "fair, democratic manner, moderated by an unbiased person."

Evans said the proponents knew in advance of the Orofino hearings which were the two dams the Engineers would suggest, but opponents were kept in the dark.

The Nov. 20 hearing was conducted by Col. F. S. Tandy, Walla Walla District engineer of the Corps of Engineers. Idaho Wildlife Federation groups from Bonners Ferry and Coeur d'Alene opposed the dams, but most organizations represented at the hearing endorsed them. The Idaho Fish and Game Department presented testimony that the dams would cut into big game winter range and migratory fish runs.

Later the First and Second District Wildlife Federations lined up in opposition to the dams.

Cullin said he opposed building of the dams either by the government or private utilities.

Don Samuelson of Sandpoint told of "that city's difficulties getting the Army Engineers to repair damage caused to its beach and sewage system after construction of Albeni Falls Dam. He charged the Engineers "dumped" the city,

Dr. Jacobs Dissents

The only dissenting voice to the anti-dam resolution was that of Dr. W. R. Jacobs of Lewiston, who said he favored it "in spirit" but that "we should have something to propose" rather than merely "objecting."

Bowler accused the Engineers of "trying to lull us into a false sense of security" by contending the dams would do little damage to wildlife, and then "calling us obstructionists when we oppose them."

Earlier in the day, Ted H. Wegener, federation president for 15 years, said he had "heard suggestions that my interest in the federation has a connection with Idaho Power Co., that I have a personal interest."

Wegener said he was not a stockholder in Idaho Power, and that his brokerage business handled Idaho Power stock the same as any other company's.

"I am not opposed to government dams where the dams are necessary and private industry can't build them," he said.

Dredge Fight Rehashed

Bowler reviewed the federation's fight for a strong dredge and pollution control bill, saying, "It's almost a miracle when you can get a purely public - interest bill through the Legislature."

He said the Idaho Water Resources Advisory Committee had studied stream pollution for four years and had an overall comprehensive control measure at the end of 1952. It was trimmed down to a basic framework, he said, and submitted to Gov. Len Jordan.

"Some of the very people who went to the governor with it were the ones who pulled the double-cross on it," he said. "The fatal blow was dealt in the Senate State Affairs Committee."

"We were getting too close to those who contaminate the water. They will always try to keep pollution in the investigative stages."

'Quiet' Hearing

The State Affairs Committee, he said, "held a very quiet public hearing on the bill."

"Harry Marsh, secretary of the Idaho Mining Assn., who had agreed to the bill, went before the committee with Bob Elder, attorney for Potlatch Forests, who stepped in ahead of their public relations man, Earl Bullock," Bowler continued.

"They were successful in burying it in committee. I offered a substitute measure which was an incredible monstrosity, which we got killed in the house."

"Another party to it was Earl Murphy, secretary of the State Chamber of Commerce."

Marsh could not be reached for comment and Murphy declined to comment except to say that he was not a member of the Water Resources Advisory Committee, and that he did oppose the bill before the committee.

Committee Blamed

Bowler blamed the State Senate Mining Committee for "burying a stringent anti-dredging law and substituting an emasculated" one, filled with "placitudes" but no enforcement provisions.

Asked from the floor who requested that the committee be excused from reporting the stronger dredging bill, Bowler said, "its chairman, Senator Ransom."

Sen. Richard Ransom (R-Blaine) was sitting in the front row as a delegate to the federation convention, but made no comment.

Bowler said claims of Bear Valley dredge operators that their products have significance in the atomic energy program "are highly overrated."

"If we put it off now, we'll be putting it off for four years," said Bowler, "because we can't get the Legislature to pass a dredge law with teeth."

The delegates also voted to assess each club half of its state federation dues to finance the fight to get the dredge proposal on the ballot, and some said they would pay their assessments immediately. In a county-by-county vote, only Clark County declined to vote for it. A few counties were not represented.