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WALLACE COMMITTEE WILL STUDY
PLAN FOR GAME-BIRD INCREASE

Proposal Contemplates Considerable Rural Employment, Use of
Marginal Farm Land, and Greater Recreational
Opportunities

Secretary Wallace has announced (Jan. 2) the appointment of a committee of three to outline a course of action under a proposed plan for enlarging the areas on which migratory game birds and upland game birds can be bred. Among other proposals the plan calls for the diversion of marginal farm land for use in the production of this kind of game.

The appointments, which had the approval of President Roosevelt, are: Thomas H. Beck, Wilton, Conn., editorial director of Collier's, chairman; J. N. Darling, newspaper cartoonist, Des Moines, Iowa; Aldo Leopold, head of the department of wild life conservation, University of Wisconsin, Madison. Mr. Darling for some time has been a member of the Advisory Board, Migratory Bird Treaty Act. The first meeting of the new committee was called for Saturday, Jan. 6.

Under the plan proposed, which the committee will consider, immediate employment would be given to several thousand men and permanent rural employment to a much larger number. It would be expected to provide a profitable new source of income for many farmers, utilization of millions of acres taken out of ordinary crop production, and healthful recreation for large numbers of people in addition

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to the many millions who now enjoy game-bird shooting.

Should the plan be put into effect the first work would include the creation of new water areas, restoration of drained lands unprofitable to agriculture, renewing of natural food supplies, cover and nesting sites, protection of birds from natural enemies, and such activities as fencing, patrolling refuges and disease prevention. The existing Federal reservations would be developed further, along with the acquisition of new areas, and there would be greater cooperation with States now working on plans for game bird conservation on public lands.

The restoration of better conditions for the production of upland game birds is thought to offer the greatest opportunity for a profitable use of much acreage being taken out of crop production. Farmers would be shown how to propagate game birds and dispose of the crop. When fully developed this use for marginal farm land would provide employment for large numbers of country people. Sponsors of the plan say that much of the machinery necessary for its operation is already available.

An outline of the plan as presented for the committee's study is attached.

The Proposed Plan

This plan provides for the restoration and increase of one of our great natural resources-- game birds. If adopted at this time it will:

- 1- Give immediate employment to thousands of men and permanent RURAL employment to from thirty to fifty thousand men
- 2- Provide a new and profitable source of income for farmers
- 3- Provide for profitable utilization of from twenty to an eventual fifty million acres of land which may be taken out of crop production
- 4- Create new business for concerns catering to outdoor recreation
- 5- Provide healthful recreational facilities for millions of our citizens in an activity which is already participated in by approximately thirteen million people

Migratory Game Bird Restoration

The preservation of migratory game birds, which is an obligation of the Federal Government under the Migratory Bird Treaty with Canada, is of prime and immediate importance because of the deplorable condition of waterfowl at the present time. Unless remedial measures are adopted promptly and prosecuted vigorously and intelligently, this resource, which is of great economic importance, may be completely exterminated.

The measures necessary for the preservation and increase of waterfowl consist of the restoration and management of water and marsh areas which constitute the breeding grounds, resting, feeding and concentration areas of wild fowl.

The work involves:

- (a) Water conservation, including the creation of new water areas, restoring drained lands which have proved unfit or unprofitable for agriculture, stabilizing water levels, etc.
- (b) Restoration of marsh and aquatic plant life to provide food, cover, and nesting sites for the birds
- (c) Protection of waterfowl from their natural enemies

(d) Other activities, such as fencing and patrolling refuges, disease prevention, etc.

The Government now owns fifty-five National Wild Life Reservations potentially suitable for migratory birds comprising approximately five million acres. Under an act of Congress, it is committed to the acquisition of a substantial additional acreage which is vitally needed for this purpose.

This plan provides for:

- 1- Development and management of existing Federal reservations
- 2- Completion of purchases of additional acreage which has already been surveyed and is in process of acquisition
- 3- Cooperation with States which are working on plans for migratory bird conservation on public lands

The work outlined above would provide immediate employment for from two to ten thousand men depending on the extent to which the proposal is acted upon. Probably 75% of the money made available for this part of the program would be spent for labor.

The important work of migratory game bird restoration appears to be exactly the type of project contemplated in the National Industrial Recovery Act. In Section 202 of that law, Congress directs the preparation of a comprehensive program of public works including the "construction and improvement of publicly owned instrumentalities and facilities"; the "conservation and development of natural resources," and the furthering of projects heretofore started "to serve the interests of the general public."

Upland Game Bird Restoration

The restoration of upland game birds offers an answer to two questions of great importance: What to do with a substantial part of the acreage taken out of crop production and how to increase farm income quickly and permanently.

Congress has declared that the restoration and propagation of game birds is a duty of the Federal Government.

The plan proposes that farmers, particularly those who cooperate with the Government in reducing acreage devoted to crop production, be encouraged, aided and educated in the propagation and management of game birds as a new cash crop.

To that end it is necessary to show farmers how to propagate game birds and how to market this crop at a profit.

The plan entails:

- 1- Supplying specific instructions to farmers on game bird production
- 2- Demonstrations in modern methods of producing game birds
- 3- Supplying initial seed stock where necessary
- 4- Assisting farmers to market game bird crops

One or more species of game birds can be successfully produced on farm land in every State, with only slight modifications of present agricultural practices on most farms. Game birds are an annual cash crop which should yield the farmer at least enough to pay his taxes and in many instances considerably more.

Full development of our game bird resources should give profitable full time rural employment to from thirty to forty thousand men and utilize immediately about fifteen and eventually fifty or more million acres of land.

Put into operation this plan would give immediate employment to approximately two thousand men in private industry (commercial game farming) and would result in, increased employment in concerns manufacturing and selling sporting arms, ammunition and equipment, outdoor clothing, and transportation of all kinds. It would materially increase the consumption of grains used in game bird feed, chiefly wheat and corn.

Administration

It is proposed that a Federal Administrator be appointed and made responsible for the prompt and efficient execution of this plan. He should have two qualified chief assistants-- one to be responsible for the increase of migratory game birds and the other upland game birds.

Much of the machinery necessary for the upland game bird work is already available in the State Directors of the Agricultural Extension Service and the County Agents.

For the execution of projects in the several States it is suggested that a commission be set up in each State to consist of the following members:

- 1- State Game Commissioner
- 2- State Director Agricultural Extension Service
- 3- Head of Grange or Farm Bureau
- 4- A prominent conservationist to be appointed by the Federal Administrator
- 5- A business man to be appointed by the Governor

Each State commission would pass upon projects within its jurisdiction and forward approved plans to the Federal Administrator for final acceptance and action.

Financing

From the ground covered in this brief survey, this plan would appear to supplement and closely coordinate with the following Government projects:

Public Works Program
Farm Adjustment Program
Citizen's Conservation Corps
Industrial Decentralization Program
Emergency Unemployment Relief Program
Land Utilization Program

To operate this plan in such way as to achieve widespread and permanent results in re-employment, increased farm income and better business, adequate funds are essential.

As before stated, the work involved in this plan is an obligation of the Federal Government and in complete accord with the letter and spirit of the National Industrial Recovery Act. It is, therefore, proposed that the sum of eighteen million dollars be set aside to carry on this work. Of this sum twelve million

dollars to be devoted to migratory game bird restoration, and six million dollars to upland game bird work.

Funds from the public works appropriation would make it possible to put the proposed plan into operation immediately.

It is believed that a large part of the outlay for this work could be returned to the Federal Treasury through one or more of the following channels-- or others of a similar nature:

- 1- A Federal license of \$1.00 for shooting migratory game birds
- 2- A tax of 10 cents per box on ammunition used for field shooting
- 3- A plan whereby seventy percent of any Federal advance for any State project would be finally returned, either through bonds or from increased revenues accruing to the State as a result of Federal aid.

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