



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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Paralleling the advent of September, first of the fall "r" months, gears of the giant "30,000,000 oyster industry will again begin to grind tomorrow, September 3, with the official Washington opening of the season.

Heralding the annual celebration will be the arrival from New York of Howard W. Beach, President of the Oyster Growers and Dealers Association, at the Washington Airport, at 9:30 a.m., on Tuesday morning. He will be met at his plane by Lewis Radcliffe, Director of the Oyster Institute of North America, and officials of the Fish and Wildlife Service, United States Department of the Interior, who will accompany him for the morning's activities.

In attendance, also, will be the Good-will Ambassador of All the Oysters of North America, an anonymous figure, who has promised to persuade the King of Oysters, himself, to be on hand to greet Beach and the others.

Following this, at 10:30, Beach will present a gift of half a hundred pedigreed, Long Island blue-points, fresh dredged from their New York beds that morning, to Mrs. Henrietta Nesbitt, head housekeeper of the White House. Contrary to usual custom, delivery of these genetically sound oysters--destined ultimately for the President's table--will be made at the back door of the Executive Mansion and given over in person to the care of Mrs. Nesbitt.

To Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes, also, Beach will convey, with the compliments of the 60,000 persons employed in the industry in the United States, a tray of selected oysters. This presentation, which will be a private one at 11:30, will be made with the assistance of Radcliffe, in the interests of the Secretary's sincere and continuing efforts through the Fish and Wildlife Service in the direction of conservation of the oyster beds of this country.

The morning's ceremony will be continued in the Department of the Interior cafeteria sharply at 12:30, noon, where Under Secretary of the Interior Alvin Wirtz, formerly of Texas (whose oyster beds are renowned throughout the south and southwest), will preside. He will there present to invited newspapermen and officials, and certain noted Washington trenchermen, several barrels of oysters shipped in for the occasion. Sandwiches, crackers, condiments, and coffee, will also be served.

These quaint ceremonies, according to statements of the industry, are being observed in an effort to provide Americans with some idea of a similar 900-year old ritual, perpetuated annually at Colchester, England.

This story runs as follows:

"In England each year there is held, and has been from time immemorial, the time-honored ceremonial of declaring open for the season the Colne Oyster Fishery within the province of the Colchester Corporation. The mayor and municipal colleagues of Colchester and members of the Colne Fishery Board, which manages the fishery, make a tour of the grounds, followed by a quaint ceremony which includes the reading of the ancient documents relating to the grant of the fishery to the Corporation, the dispatch of a telegram to the King, intimating that according to ancient custom and charter of over 900 years, the fishery had been opened for the

season and that the officials are drinking to the King's health. This is accomplished with gin to the accompaniment of the consumption of squares of gingerbread. Each year the group is addressed by some distinguished guest. The party, on an oyster vessel, make a sample dredge--first of the season--and always announce them the best ever."

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