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# DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

## INFORMATION SERVICE

### FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release to the SUNDAY PAPERS, APRIL 29, 1945.

South Dakota has again become eligible to participate in the benefits of the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes announced today.

Under this Act the States select suitable projects, perform work on them with their own personnel and are entitled to 75 per cent reimbursement for costs incurred on approved projects. One of the participation requirements is that there shall be no diversion of license fees paid by hunters for any other purpose than the administration of the State Fish and Game Department.

Early in 1943, the South Dakota Legislature enacted the so-called "Tithing Act" which placed a 10 per cent levy on the receipts of the State Fish and Game Department. Returns from the sale of hunting licenses which have averaged close to \$500,000 annually is the principal source of such receipts. Application of the Tithing Act provisions resulted in an annual deduction of \$50,000 from game department receipts. The moneys thus deducted were used for general operating expenses of the State, resulting in a diversion of funds within the meaning of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act.

The State was advised in June 1943 that when the Tithing Act became effective on July 1, 1943, South Dakota would no longer be eligible to share in the benefits of the Federal Act. But the repeal of the Tithing Act during South Dakota's 1945 Legislative Session has now cleared the way for that State again to use moneys appropriated by the Congress for expenditure on this cooperative Federal-State wildlife restoration program.

During the seven fiscal years, 1939 to 1945 inclusive, that funds have been appropriated by the Congress and apportioned to the States for use on wildlife restoration projects, South Dakota has received a total of \$171,524.88.

In the last several years the Congress has reduced appropriations materially due to the inability of the States to expend relatively large sums of money on wildlife restoration projects. In consequence, the special Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Fund in the Treasury coming from the excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition has accumulated a reserve which amounted to \$10,640,135.38 on December 31, 1944. This accumulated money, together with excise tax collections which total approximately \$3,000,000 per year in normal times will be available for post-war usage by the States when appropriated by the Congress. With labor, equipment and supplies being available in all needed amounts during the after-war period, much badly needed wildlife restoration work can be accomplished by the program participants. South Dakota and 46 other states now participating in this cooperative program are now planning toward that end.