

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

REMARKS OF NATHANIEL P. REED, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE AND PARKS, BEFORE THE EASTERN REGION, FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERMEN, MOUNT POCONO, PENNSYLVANIA, SATURDAY, MAY 15, 1971

"You are assured, though there be ignorant men of another belief, that angling is an art, and you know that art better than any that I know, and that is truth, is demonstrated by the fruits of that pleasant labor which you enjoy when your purpose is to give rest to your mind, and divest yourself of your more serious business and which is often to dedicate a day or two to this recreation.

"At which time, if common anglers should attend you and be eye witness of your success, not of your fortune, but your skill, it would doubtless beget in them an emulation to be like you, and that emulation might beget an industrious diligence to be so, but I know it is not attainable by common capacities."

So our master Izaak Walton wrote in 1653.

There are several great challenges in that preamble--to find time to angle--to rest our all too busy minds--to set an example--to master a difficult art.

In this busy, busy era of noise, pollution and strife thank God for these precious moments in this historic Valley. Look up to the Hills, boys, my old headmaster use to admonish, the strength and courage to go on can be found if one will take advantage of precious moments on streamside.

How can man attain great goals if he is tired of mind and body. Izaak Walton urged us to refresh ourselves--to pause, to recharge, to regrow.

My fishing life has been built around men who set rare examples. As a boy my heroes were the New York Yankees and the great fly fishermen of our country. I had a burning, all consuming, passion to fish. I have been lucky for I have had the best of it--more than my share. Although I can honestly say I no longer really care about killing a trout or salmon, I still am driven to angle. There is no greater joy for me than to handle a perfect flyrod. The magic alliance of bamboo and line--the power, the grace, the style--this is translated into joy.

It matters little what I am fishing for. I prefer a meadow stream with large hatches of small Ephemerae, Terrestrials, and crystal clear water. I have made the circuit which Mr. Hewitt maintained was natural evolution from the killer of the most fish, to the biggest fish to the angler who only cares about the most difficult fish.

Loving a piece of water, owning great tackle; flies, leaders, lines, reels, this is all part of the joy of fly fishing.

Not for everyone! But for those who want to have the most pleasure, it is the only way.

I am delighted to be here with you this evening, delighted to share the warmth and pleasure of camaraderie.

I am the luckiest man in the world. I gave up a "sporting life" because I saw all the things that I like to do and which mean something to me being ruined, despoiled, polluted. I was being cheated by reckless so called public works programs, by dams, by road builders, by polluters by the ever expanding pressure of man.

Surely never in the history of man has so much been given away so quickly.

As a group we have not been forceful enough in protecting the great natural resources of America.

But the time has come--like spring time--a new awakening-- a genuine national stirring of interest and concern. Certainly there are some oddballs that take advantage of a legitimate problem. But on the whole the great environmental renaissance which we are part of is one of the most encouraging signs for the 70's.

More than a century ago Alexis De Tocqueville, the French political philosopher, visited the United States to get a first hand look at our new democracy.

He was impressed by our clear skies, our inviting streams, the endless expanses of our forests and plains and the vigor of our 13 million citizens. He wrote: "A democratic power is never likely to perish for lack of strength, or of its resources, but it may very well fall because of the misdirection of its strength and the abuse of its resources."

Those words have a haunting quality about them.

In this room are assembled the sons of Walton, Gordon, Halford, Skues, Bergman, Hewitt, Atherton, Flick, Jennings, Grove, La Branche and Schwiebert a noble gathering. I might make the pun--What a Cast!

Are we to unite to preserve what has been left to us and correct some of the greivous errors of the past?

I came to Washington because the new Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton is a giant among men, 6'8"--240 pounds, and unlike most giants--he is not gentle. Let me assure you he knows and believes his administration will be marked by making the tough hardnosed decisions which will lead this Nation out of the darkness into a new era of environmental concern. Not just concern, the Department of the Interior is becoming the corner of Washington where the action is.

Its fun, challenging ferociously hard work but the possibility of real accomplishment gives our staffs new hope and spirit. I am proud to be part of this movement.

Basically I am an activist and I try to live up to my word.

The President and the Secretary asked me to come to Washington to help make the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife the premier biological service on earth. We are going to do just that.

We need dollars to hire the staffs to produce the results. I have a cripple on my hands when the country needs a giant.

Within the Bureau are a cadre of the finest minds that any country can claim. Coming from our colleges and universities are the brightest group of life scientists in the world. Judicially mixing and melding these two groups together combining wisdom and sagacity with hot blood and new ideas will give us a service you will be proud of. I am committed to that course of action.

Turning for a moment to another area of interest--consolidation of resource agencies.

As all of you doubtless know, when the trout gets into a fight over habitat with some such development as a power plant, the poor fish is usually the loser. When the fish wins, it becomes a case to cheer about. And over the decades there have been very few such remarkable victories.

A prime reason is that the entire field of natural resources has been divided among a number of administering agencies. There simply wasn't the coordination needed to assure the trout a fair fight. And there still isn't.

President Nixon said the watchword of his Administration is "reform." One of his landmark reform attempts is his proposed reorganization of seven existing Executive Departments into four. It will probably astound you when I reveal now I mean to get in a good word for his proposed Department of Natural Resources.

Seriously, this is a desperately needed reform. Resource administrators have recognized the need for years. Now that the public has awakened to our ecological malfeasances, I believe there is hope we are on the way at last to a rational realignment of our resource and environmental agencies.

Instead of a batch of semi-independent agencies operating on a roll-your-own or do-it-yourself basis, the total national effort in managing natural resources has to be brought together. It is simply common sense, and spokesmen for both political parties have been saying so out loud for years. President Nixon's reorganization plan, submitted to Congress March 25, provides a chart for getting the shakeup accomplished. As taxpayers, not to mention friends of fish, you shouldn't have any difficulty deciding which side you're on.

A final word --

We must be a band of brothers, committed to the principle that our children's children have rights too. It is up to us to see that they get their share.

Think of this for a moment--here we are, the descendents of the miracle of evolution, locked together on this tiny spinning sphere, lost in the eternity of space.

Although our lives translate themselves into a flicker of a moment in time, we can be infinitely creative or destructive. It's our choice and everyone of us counts.

Abraham Lincoln charged us well when he wrote:

'Let us have faith that right makes might and in that faith, let us to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.'

Thank you for the privilege of addressing you.

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