

MINUTES OF MEETING OF WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION FEBRUARY 25 IN

COLUMBIA FEBRUARY 25, 1953

All members were present except Mr. Smith. Also present was Assistant Director Webb.

Mr. Warren brought up several bills that had been introduced and Mr. Webb said that although the Union county bill providing for election of the game warden had been passed by the House the delegation was not too interested in its final passage and the bill would probably be killed.

He also said that it was probable that Williamsburg would go into Zone 6 and Clarendon into Zone 7, where the quail seasons would suit them better. This would automatically settle the problem of these two counties setting up two new zones.

Mr. Warren stated the investigation of the Commercial Fisheries Division by the Governor's office, which had been asked by Mr. Warren, had been completed. He said the report revealed nothing that looked like any crookedness but rumors only as to affairs prior to the Commission taking over. He said the report showed where Inspector Richardson had been charged with taking money but the proof was very skimpy. There was testimony that an inspector had taken money from shrimpers but he had not been employed when the Commission took over. He said that, in substance, there was nothing to be done.

It was agreed that some immediate agreement should be reached on Clarks Hill.

The matter of wardens engaging in politics was brought up and the following resolution by Mr. McKeithan was adopted: "Whereas heretofore the Wildlife Resources Commission has instructed wardens to refrain from political activity, therefore be it resolved by the Commission that the Director of the Division of Game and the Director of the Division of Commercial Fisheries be forthwith instructed and directed to notify every employee that they are to be hands off in all political races and not become sponsors of any candidate or candidates and refrain from all political activity and that violations of these instructions will warrant discharge."

Mr. Cantey stated that some further weeding out of wardens was needed and it was agreed that this could be accomplished after a chief of law enforcement and supervisors were appointed.

The quail hatchery program was discussed and Mr. Webb said consolidation of the program with one man in charge should be considered.

Mr. McKeithan suggested some of the hatcheries might be leased to counties and a motion was passed authorizing the Director to work out lease agreements with counties with funds under the counties' credit under the old system utilized.

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The Secretary was instructed to continue plans for a hunting and fishing film in cooperation with the Standard Oil Company.

Mr. Webb and the Secretary were instructed to confer with Mr. M. D. Farrar and Doug Wade regarding the warden school at Clemson this summer.

The Secretary was instructed to send out more news releases and also to prepare a regular news letter to wardens.

Mr. Johnson then asked why the Clarks Hill act had not been put into effect and Mr. Webb explained the reasons.

The question of breeders licenses for persons releasing large quantities of game was brought up and the Commission agreed that it would be unwise to consider it.

The Secretary was instructed to write Dr. Gutermuth regarding the invitation to attend the National Wildlife Conference in Washington.

The Commission then went to the State House for an appearance before the Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee and the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee.

Mr. Warren outlined the Wildlife Management Institute report and the Commission's program to the joint committee, stressing the fact that it was a long range program and that certain powers should be granted by the General Assembly to make it successful.

Mr. Warren was questioned by Senator Rodgers and Rep. Carter of Beaufort regarding matters affecting commercial fisheries, chiefly the laws and law enforcement.

Mr. Warren stated that it would be a good idea, if the Legislature authorized it, to enter into reciprocal agreements with Georgia and North Carolina. He also spoke in favor of the bill to repeal all special fishing permits and have a state-wide fishing license.

Senator Morrison of Georgetown asked about the extension of the Santee-Cooper tailrace sanctuary and whether Dr. Lutz had been consulted. Mr. Warren explained that under the law the Director, at the request of a delegation, establishes a sanctuary and that the Commission had not known of the extension until it was announced.

Senator Dennis of Berkeley then explained that there had been much misunderstanding on the matter and that when the steam plant goes into operation it would bring great concentrations of fish. He also said the opening of the locks would help the distribution of rockfish and other species.

Mr. Warren said was asking Director Richardson confer with the Berkeley delegation and hoped something could be worked out.

Senator Wallace of Marlboro then inquired what the Commission policy was in the selection of wardens and Mr. Warren explained the policy that was followed.

Senator Rodgers again brought up the matter of law enforcement, reading a letter that he said disputed the Wildlife Management Institute report on the number of violations by certain shrimpers and also criticizing Director Seabrook.

Mr. Warren replied that he had asked the Governor for an investigation and the report showed nothing against Director Seabrook or inspectors now employed.

Rep. Carter asked whether the Advisory Board should not be given greater powers and Mr. Warren said it either should be or should be abolished.

Rep. Shuler of Orangeburg asked about the possibility of reopening the tailrace and who should be asked about this and was told that it should be done through the Berkeley delegation.

Mr. Johnson then presented the proposed bill to give the Commission authority to set seasons, bag limits and zones, saying that people should get away from the idea game was a local problem. He called attention to the Institute reasons why the Commission should be granted this power, since with the Legislature meeting in January it was unable to tell what fall populations might be. He added the Commission was not asking this merely to have the authority but because it believed it was the best plan.

Senator Dennis said he did not believe the Legislature had the power to grant this under the Constitution.

Senator Rodgers and Rep. Carter said they believed the marine resources could be better handled by persons more familiar with the problems and Rep. Carter said they should be under the Advisory Board.

Rep. Reaves of Clarendon expressed the opinion most seasons were too long and Mr. Johnson agreed.

Senator Morrison asked who will make the study to determine the proper seasons and Mr. Johnson replied the Commission planned to employ more personnel but was going slowly. He added that the present laws are confused, unsound and unjustified.

Rep. Ravenel of Charleston said the people of Charleston were satisfied with what the Commission has done. He was questioned by Senator Rodgers and Rep. Carter.

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Speaking briefly were: Mac Boykin of Sumter, chairman of the conservation committee of the State Chamber of Commerce; Charlie Brice, chairman of the Federation's legislative committee; Harry Hampton and Douglas McKay, Jr., all expressing support for the Commission's program.

*Eddie Finlay*