

FOLLOWING IS THE COMPLETE AND VERBATIM REPORT OF CHAIRMAN ELTZROTH'S REMARKS FOLLOWING AN EXECUTIVE MEETING OF THE WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION ON NOVEMBER 15, 1968, IN COLUMBIA, ALONG WITH DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS BY OTHER COMMISSIONERS AND DIRECTOR WEBB. MR. WEBB, MR. HOWELL, MR. RYAN AND MR. FINLAY HAD BEEN INVITED IN TO HEAR THE REPORT.

THE CRUX OF MR. ELTZROTH'S REMARKS AND HIS STATEMENTS REGARDING THE COMMISSION'S FUTURE POLICIES ARE CARRIED IN THE MINUTES.

THIS REPORT IS BEING GIVEN ONLY TO COMMISSIONERS, DIRECTORS WEBB AND LUNZ, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR RYAN AND CHIEF OF LAW ENFORCEMENT HOWELL.

Mr. Eltzroth: We want to discuss with Mr. Webb the matters that we want to discuss with the three of you and, perhaps, Jim, you may be critical of this. This is my fault so don't be critical of anybody but me when we get through. I figure this is the best way to do it.

Mr. Webb: Any way, you say.

Mr. Eltzroth: If you are mad, it is my fault. We have all thought about this and talked about this and done very damn little about it, if anything. I am going to call names that I don't want recorded. The Governor has been attempting to talk with me about one of our agents, for some time. He has sent me word so that I would know what was coming. He has been very kind. I went over to talk with him but he was busy. I didn't get to see him and he had to leave town, yet I'm going to have to face it. We have a man under investigation, and all of us know about this. We haven't finished the investigation so I am not going to call names, yet we all know who we are talking about. We have got a man under investigation now for possible criminal violation and this stems from a liquor problem. (The machine was cut off briefly here).

The Commission, in executive session, has just determined that it will be the policy of this Commission that any employee of the Wildlife Resources Department found driving a vehicle belonging to the Department who has had a drink--don't misunderstand what I am saying. I didn't say, "Who was under the



influence of liquor." I said, "who has had a drink" of alcoholic beverages-- would be suspended summarily by the Director, for a period of two weeks, without anything. His automobile will be taken from him. For any second violation, he would summarily be suspended until the next meeting of the Commission, at which time the Commission under the law has to act on his discharge. And I can tell you the Commission, as it is constituted, with the exception of Dr. Jones, who is not here, is in agreement that he will be discharged by complete dis severance from working with this Department.

Any man in uniform, who works for this Department, who takes a drink in uniform, will be suspended summarily by the Director for a period of two weeks without pay. Any second offense, he will be suspended until the next meeting of the Commission, at which time we will expect to have a recommendation that he be discharged, and the Commission is unanimous, as it is constituted today with the exception of Dr. Jones, who is absent, that he will be discharged.

Now this may seem to be a strong thing to you, gentlemen, but this is it now. The Supervisors are responsible. They are responsible to you, Mr. Howell. You are responsible to Mr. Ryan and to Mr. Webb. All the other uniformed personnel are responsible to you, Pat, and to you, Jim. I expect every man to know exactly what we are talking about and we expect to have this done. We expect our Supervisors to become supervisors. All of us have



read the reports that follow the rote of "everybody is a nice fellow." Well, everybody ain't a nice fellow. Now, the Commission is not composed of a group of people who don't understand how to get across this creek. We may not be the smartest people in the business, but we are smart enough to know that all of our officers, all of our biologists, all of our personnel are not above reproach and yet each report that we see indicates they are. The Supervisors are going to be responsible to see that their personnel work, and they do their job. We realize that we have some people who have been with us for twenty to thirty years, who have outside jobs. We do not expect to make these people quit these jobs. We do not expect to fire them. But we do not expect our new personnel to have outside interests. We expect them to devote all their time to this job and to work for us. It is my personal opinion, and I have not discussed it with the Commission, but wanted to bring to you, to Pat and to Gene, whatever you may think of it. It is my personal opinion that we have not properly set up working habits for our people. As it stands, so far as I can see, our men are on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. I would recommend to you that you find two days a week for each man that he have off. In addition to that, I would recommend to you that he has at least a period of three hours, either in the morning or the evening on Sundays so that he can attend the church of his choice. But if Conservation Officer Smith in Berkeley county should have Monday and Tuesday off, Conser-



vation Officer Jones, who is very near him in Berkeley county, should then have Wednesday and Thursday off. And it should be rotated so that these people have adequate time to take care of their business that they have, and, of course, all of us have to take care of certain family problems, certain financial arrangements, certain personal business. They should also have time for their personal recreation. We have hired entirely too many people so that they could have recreation at the expense of the State of South Carolina. We know that, we see that. All us see that, and all of us know that. What we are talking about doing now, and what the Commission has determined, is that we are going to have personnel that is equal to, or superior to, any other law enforcement personnel in this state, or any other state.

Now, so that there can't be any misunderstanding about it, the Commission is completely agreed that this is going to be done, and that we are going to look to Jim Webb to see that it is done. The day that you don't do your job you are jeopardizing Jim Webb's job. So far as I know, the Commission has never refused Jim Webb's recommendation in regard to personnel, but if I ever think it is wrong I will refuse to follow it. Don't misunderstand me, but if he comes in here and says that "I can't get this job done that you tell me be done because Pat Ryan is in the way," as far as I am concerned, Pat, you had better get you another job. If he says that Gene is not getting the men, the Supervisors, to get the men to get the job done, then, Gene, you had better



hunt another job.

Now, we have determined that we are going to make our decisions. We are going to make them if they are four-three, or if they are 5-2, or if they are six-one or if they are seven-zero. Whatever they are, the majority of this Commission has made a determination that we are going to completely support that determination. We may be divided four-three but when we walk out of this room we are going to walk out seven-zero. This is a "get tough" proposition, gentlemen. It means just that.

We want you to give consideration to setting up an under-cover proposition to go into effect after everybody has had an opportunity to know what we are doing. We don't want it to go into effect today. We don't want a game warden fired this afternoon for drinking liquor. We want them to know what the situation is. But, then, we want under-cover people working within our Department. We want Supervisors who are capable of firing. Now, Jim, if you have a suggestion that you want to make in regard to handling this, we will be happy to consider it, if you think it needs consideration by us under the law. If you don't think it needs consideration by us under the law, we expect you to handle it.

Mr. Webb: I am in thorough accord with it, and I think I can handle it. I would like to, if it is within our power, and I think it is, for you to delegate to me the power which you have for suspension.



Mr. Eltzroth: We have already done this--temporary suspension of two weeks.

Mr. Webb: But what I would like to do is to let the Supervisors and other supervisory personnel have the power to suspend subject to review by the Director and the Commission.

Mr. Eltzroth: So with no objection, and if there is objection, please evidence it.

(At this point some off-the-record matters were discussed). Following which Mr. Eltzroth stated that:

The alcoholic problem will go into effect immediately. Is that satisfactory with everybody?

At this point there was a general discussion and it was impossible to pick up all that was said until Mr. Oliphant asked:

"Then in case of emergency, everybody could be called?"

Mr. Eltzroth: Oh, always. I don't think we need anything on that. All of our men are on 24-hour call and they are going to stay on 24-hour call. Mr. Webb has requested, and I suggest to you without objection, that he be allowed to give Supervisors the authority to relieve personnel in the field--law enforcement personnel in the field--of their duties, of their badges, of their guns, and of their automobiles, subject to report to him or his assistant within 48 hours. Mac Flood can walk up to any man working for him and say:



"You're suspended. Give me your pistol, give me your badge, the keys to your automobile." He has to report this to Mr. Webb within 48 hours. The Supervisors, the Chief, the Assistant Director, can do the same thing. Without objection? So ordered.

At this point there was off-the-record discussion, following which the tape picked up:

Mr. Eltzroth: We have agreed, gentlemen, that political pressure will hit us. And if we can stand up and face the political pressure then we are going to say: "Thank you, Senator. We think you are a great senator, and you contribute a great deal to the State by your service. We hope that you have the same respect for us that we do for you. We have a job to do, and this is what we are going to do, and this is the way it is going to happen. Senator, we are sorry you don't like it. Thank you very much, Mr. Representative, we know that you represent a large constituency, and we know that you hold a very important position on a committee that means a very great deal to us, but Mr. Representative, we are sorry, but we have a job to do and we are going to do it. Our men have not been up to par in certain respects, and we will try to see that they are now."

Mr. Webb: Will the degree of alcoholic consumption have any bearing?

Mr. Eltzroth: I asked him (Eddie F.) to record it and you will find that I said: "Who had had a drink of alcoholic beverage."



Mr. Webb: I know, I heard that. But I mean--

Mr. Eltzroth: No, sir, that is "a drink of alcoholic beverage." What I am saying for the record is that this is akin to the girl who was a "little bit pregnant."

Mr. Mishoe: Well, now, let me bring up a hypothetical situation. For instance, say I am a Conservation Officer. I work all day and I go in at night--

Mr. Eltzroth: We don't need this on the record, Eddie. Do we?

The recorder was then cut off and after a brief further discussion all personnel was asked into the meeting.

*Eddie Finlay*

