

222 Blewett Ave
Nov 23rd / 41.

My dear M.B.

What an assignment - to carry coals
to Newcastle!

I think the best way to answer your
letter is to suggest you read a book entitled "Guardians
of the Wild", written by a person named Williams.

The two societies you are to address
expect you, presumably, to speak to speak on wild life
principally, with Parks only an incidental. Well,
it seems to me the general Parks story should serve
as a perfectly good introduction. You will recall our
first worry was to satisfy ourselves as to whether Parks were
worth-while or not. And the worth-while-ness had to be
measured in terms of human welfare, first spiritual; second
mental; third, physical. No, not separately that way, we
really felt that these were so intimately mixed up in life,
that they were mutually dependent. So all three were
required. You did more than anyone else to provide the
proof. And you convinced the rest of us Parks could
pay great dividends in those terms.

Our next problem was to sell Parks to our ministers,
Parliament and the public. You were in the midst of
these operations. There is no reason why we should not
admit we figured that to get funds + public opinion
behind Parks, (for development purposes) we had to
first show the certainty of financial dividends.
Hence our presentation of the values of tourist
business. First we showed it in regard to Parks

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themselves: You will recall the famous calculation of
the report of ^{Bain} scenery and comparison with the return per
acre from wheat reports. But Parks were much from
much of Canada and so with Parks as a basis we
carried on a campaign to ~~convince~~ educate the
people of Canada of the importance of selling
the scenery of every part of Canada. It must be
fresh in your memory how well this plan worked out,
even if it did embarrass us with an avalanche of
demands for new parks. And thus we got our
Parks working. But at the same time we never
neglected the other kind of dividends; and the
annual reports were used to present them to the public.
Because they appeared sound — and perhaps because
they were a novelty in a front publication — our
contributions were great acceptance in the
newspapers of Canada. The effect was
especially obvious when our great 10 year fight against
the power bars was in progress. Virtually all
the press outside of Calgary was with us in the
fight. (Of course since then the fight we won
has been fought over again and lost — Minnewanka
is gone. But it was not our fault.) (I should not say
"fought over again", I fear).

Let me get my health again and get
back to the keystone of Parks as we visualized them — viz
as institutions primarily for the conservation of mankind.
Because we wanted to conserve man we
found it imperative (or at least important) to preserve wild life.

Perhaps at the very beginning when we were feeling on our way we simply recognized that wild things had an extraordinary attraction to humans and that therefore they were, at least, an important factor in the tourist industry on which we were then specializing. If we were selling the wilderness we would not be giving full value (or get the best returns) unless we had an ample supply of W. L. So, we proceeded to see that all parks were made genuine Sanctuaries. Your book has some good stories illustrating this.

As in the case of the tourist question Wild things will not constantly remain in protected areas and so we naturally had to look for co-operation from the province controlling the areas surrounding parks. And just about that time the proposal for a migration Bird Treaty with U. S. began to get under way. Several Dominion Depts were concerned with it and the result was the appointment of a Dominion Advisory Wild Life Board. That Board first dealt with the Treaty and then began gathering a perspective on W. L. throughout the Dominion. Each province legislated on W. L. from its purely provincial view point. The Board began a campaign to bring about co-operation and co-ordination among the provinces. It was felt that if justice was to be done W. L. (and the country) must be dealt with from

a broad national perspective.. It naturally followed that there should be Dominion-wide provincial conferences and so these were instituted, the Dominion undertaking all the cost of bringing official representatives of all the provinces each year. ~~This point~~ You cannot ~~overstate~~ ^{overstate} the results, because they were most valuable. The exchange of views and experiences, the emancipating from purely local considerations and from jealousies etc., ~~the~~ were most valuable, but ~~not~~ not more so than the ~~same~~ effect of the provincial officers and Dominion officers all knowing each other, learning to trust each other, and developing the sense that they were all engaged in a great work, greater than if viewed only from their ^{own local} view point, more worth while working at because of that; and a work which would promote the cause everywhere more effectively than ~~it~~ could be done in any other way. I know I am involved here but what we aimed at & secured was a "me for all and all for me" result. I overlooked in the evolution that the first step inside Paris w.f. work was our being assigned N.W. Boreas Act,

it coming to us because we were doing W.F. work in parks. I also overlooked the parks, animal Parks, Buffalo, Elk Island, wh. ~~just about~~ also helped drive us into the wider field. The final act was the assignment of Migratory Bird Treaty act to us for administration.

Well, that's the background of Parks W.F. ~~activities~~ activities. (Again I say "Coals to Newcastle"). Where did we go from there?

One of the first steps was the building of active co-operation with U.S. conservationists. Not only the Federal but officials but also state officials and game organizations and conservation leaders like ^{Normandy} John B. Burnham, American Game Protective Association, I saw Walter League etc. The aim was to bring about a North American perspective on W.F. problems. Such was vital for migratory birds; it was most helpful in regard to mammals as well.

You are safe in stating that Parks Bd. based its ^{work on this} conviction that human welfare demanded the perpetuation of W.F., that mankind would sustain a serious loss if W.F. disappeared. I will not elaborate the reasons and arguments in that connection. I think you know them pretty well; perhaps the greatest is the way W.F. attracts everyone (not just the hunter) to the wilderness. & if you want more on this line I'll do it up for you.

What have we done specifically to conserve? That means details of laws, regulations, education, enforcement, laws, ^{scientific} studies of W.L. conditions and development of ~~scientific~~ solutions for problems.

Education - Lectures, pamphlets, newspaper and magazine articles, moving pictures, junior audubon societies & ~~societies~~. But the greatest & most valuable of all was perhaps the discovery & utilization of Grey Owl!

~~As~~ As in the case of "Report on Scenery" an effort was made to the financial side of the public by showing that ~~our~~ wild life constituted a great business fact, with millions invested in it and millions expended upon it each year. I must look up the figures for you. They are staggering. We had to go on the old line of presenting the financial side to secure support for the important side.

I almost overlooked the sanctuaries. Large ones in N.W.T.; scores of these in prairie provinces, quite a number on north shore of ^{bay of} St. Lawrence.

Re Migration Birds - You know of the drought problems and botulism; had passing disappearance of red grass; disappearance of water feeding areas in south (cultivation) ditto re breeding areas in Canada.

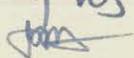
I wrote an article for the American Family Journal; will try to dig up a copy for you. It dealt with the attitude of pre-historic man towards W.F.; animal status in middle ages etc. and was designed to justify the idea of getting back to the old idea of man & W.F. being companions & friends etc. I think it wd be useful to you.

I am not going to read this over. I just sat down & wrote. Probably if I read it I wd tear it up.

Write me for specific things you may want. I started looking over some of my "book" notes on W.F. but they were so numerous that it wd be hopeless to start throwing them at you.

This is just a preliminary, dashed-off thing. If it is of any help I will be glad.

Sincerely yours


Kind regards from both of us -


JB Harkin to MB Williams, Nov 1941

Transcription / Additional Information

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Our next problem was to sell Parks to our ministers, Parliament and the public. You were in the midst of those operations. There is no reason why we should not admit we figured that to get funds & public opinion behind Parks, (for development purposes) we had to first show the certainty of financial dividends. Hence our presentation of the values of tourist business. First we showed it in regard to Parks

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