

To Mr. B. N. M. Grey Owl, 5 visit to  
England

J. B. HARKIN,  
COMMISSIONER

JCC/EW



NATIONAL PARKS  
MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT  
HISTORIC SITES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARKS OF CANADA

OTTAWA 2nd December, 1935.

IN YOUR REPLY REFER TO FILE.....

My dear M.B.,

To say I am disgusted with the Lovat Dickson outfit is expressing it mildly. You are not the only one that they have kept away from Grey Owl. Harper Cory who has done so much for us in the interests of conservation and the National Parks as well, of course benefitting himself quite a little, endeavoured to see him but they have made it very plain to him, in fact, said Grey Owl did not want to see him which is something I do not believe as my experience with Grey Owl is that he is not small minded where other writers are concerned. I am forced to admit now that the big mistake was that I did not go with him which was the original intention of the Macmillan Company here who are really, I believe, part of the Lovat Dickson outfit.

I have only had one letter and a couple of cables from Grey Owl since he went over but before leaving London about three weeks ago he asked Lovat Dickson to write me a letter and tell me how he was getting along which Dickson did. I may have got under Dickson's skin a little as I have told him very plainly once or twice what I thought should be done. It really is a case of highly specialized commercialism, endeavouring to get all the benefits possible under the guise of conservation and helping Canada but this side of the story doesn't register with me for a minute. I do not believe for an instant that Grey Owl has any idea of the game they are playing and I could understand it in the first place but now that he has found his feet, that is, judging from this distance, why he should not be allowed to see anybody who has been of benefit to our work.

Grey Owl and myself have been talking over a feature film for the last two years and he has certain views on the matter and so have I but my anxiety at the moment is to get him back to Canada and do all our negotiating and work in this connection in the first instance here. I had to check Lovat Dickson up in the contract that they had Grey Owl sign in which they refer to motion pictures. I informed them they had no right to this end of the work. They said they agreed with me and what was meant was taking of news-shots. They agreed not to interfere at all with any other type of motion picture. This, of course, Grey Owl agreed to so I believe we are safe for the time being at any rate from any interference by anybody in Britain as I do not think Grey Owl will go back on his word. I am telling you everything I can in this letter for your own information, as to just how the situation

stands as far as I can see.

I would be very glad to have you have Mr. Guthrie look me up when he comes to Canada and I could have a chat with him. If you only knew the time I have had in the last three years trying to protect Grey Owl not only for his own good in connection with motion pictures but also in squaring everybody when he would let his foot slip, which I regret to say happened more frequently than I liked. They cannot get Grey Owl into any picture unless we say so and I do believe he is loyal enough to the National Parks not to permit any such undertaking unless I agree. Lovat Dickson have just pulled a fast one on me by cabling through the High Commissioner's office for seven new reels claiming that the ones we sent them, which were new in October, are showing signs of wear. This on the face of it is absolutely ridiculous but I am going to ship them the seven new ones they asked for on the condition that they return the seven which they say are showing signs of wear. You know from your experience that one month's constant showing if the films are properly taken care of never do show very much signs of wear in that time. I use new film on my trips showing anywhere from one hundred to one hundred and thirty times and they are still in good enough condition to go into circulation.

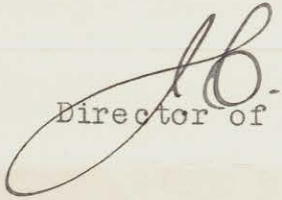
We are shipping into the United States this winter upwards of 1500 films which means quite a lot of publicity in that country.

I am going to wait for the next English mail and see if there is a letter from Grey Owl. It should be here tomorrow or the next day and I will then write him and ask him to look you up. Then, possibly, we will get to the truth of the matter. Everything in this letter of course is for your private information.

There is very little new going on here and we really do not know where we are at. There will probably be some reorganization which may or may not affect us.

Kindest regards to Mrs. Herridge and best wishes to yourself from the staff and accept my warmest breathings, as ever,

Yours sincerely,

  
Director of Publicity.



JC Campbell to MB Williams, Dec 1935

Transcription / Additional Information

[Letterhead]

Department of the Interior  
National Parks of Canada  
Ottawa

2<sup>nd</sup> December, 1935.

[Handwritten across the top] To M.B.W. re Grew Owl's visit to England

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Director of Publicity.