

# WILDLIFE SESSION

## WHAT HUNTING AND FISHING MEANS TO INDUSTRY

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I suppose it would also be appropriate for me to tell you that I'm glad to be here, but since I hold the trait of honesty in higher esteem than I do politeness, I'll be frank to admit that I have mixed feelings over this talk. Ever since John Blanchard asked me to address you commission members, I have searched my conscience to find a good reason why I should be presumptuous enough to think that I might have any contribution to make on a subject to experts who know far more about the field I must touch on than I ever will know.

I've been asked to talk to you on what recreation, particularly hunting and fishing, means to industry. Specifically: what it means to my organization, Louisiana Power and Light Company.

First of all, I've noticed for some time now that it's pretty doggone difficult to find my boss, and some others, on Friday afternoons. (Notice that I didn't indict myself specifically there.) That's one thing that hunting and fishing means to my Company.

Seriously, my Company looks with an informal, but appreciative eye, on the fine streams and woodlands in and around the areas in Louisiana in which we serve, and incidentally, we serve electric power in 46 of Louisiana's 64 parishes.

We have found in our industrial and area development work in the Company that these streams and woodlands provide us with a strong talking point to industry when we are doing our best to attract it to our area.

We are so thoroughly convinced of this that, in a forthcoming brochure which is not yet off the press, we have devoted the entire back page to the many wonderful advantages for fishermen and hunters to be found in Louisiana. We have played this "big" and we think wisely so.

A recreational survey in our Company has shown that more than sixty per cent of our employees avail themselves, either regularly or occasionally, of the wonderful fishing and hunting here in Louisiana. I'm sure that out in our districts, in smaller towns and communities, that percentage is much higher.

What does this mean to my Company? What does it mean to any Company whose employees engage in hunting and fishing, and in other types of recreation? I don't believe any of you will disagree with me in the following statement: Without doubt, this recreation, whatever it is, helps make them better employees. In fact, I believe so strongly in this that I am not going to take up much time to support that statment. Let it suffice to say that it seems obvious that employees who, in their leisure time, take advantage of the opportunities of recreational activities are better employees than ones who don't. They're more relaxed in their jobs on Monday morning or on any other day in the week, and they don't have those

“burdensome looks.” I know this has proved true in my company, regardless of whether the employee is a worker on the outside, such as a lineman, or a worker on the inside, such as an accountant or cashier.

A sidelight might be pointed to right here: that, often the results of hunting and fishing make for mighty fine additional delicacies to be put on the table at home. I know that anyone who has sat down to venison steak, squirrel stew or roast duck will agree with me on this point.

In talking with John Blanchard several weeks ago, I learned that a recent survey, made I believe for the year 1947, showed that nearly four billion dollars was spent on the sports of hunting and fishing in this country.

Also, that in 1950 the total spent on sportsmen's dogs alone amounted to approximately \$875,000,000.00, or a great deal more than what the public spent that same year on all baseball, football, basketball and hockey games, as well as horse races and prized fights all combined!

I'm not going to bore you with more figures. I think these illustrate extremely well that hunting and fishing, your business, is more important by far to America's recreational life than any other sport.

I would like to call your attention to the fact that economists and social experts have estimated that by 1960 most of us will be at our jobs only 36 hours per week.

Obviously, this 36-hour week means more leisure time for most of us, more time for all those things which Americans like to do. It means, among other things, I think, more time for hunting and fishing.

Since it means these things, it means more freedom to all Americans. This additional freedom, it seems to me, focuses a problem squarely on you game and fish commissioners. It means a larger responsibility, an evergrowing one, in making sure that Americans will continue to have the opportunities to participate in their favorite pastime, hunting and fishing, and in as many places as it is possible for them to do so.

Looking at your record here in Louisiana, and in other states throughout the South, there is no doubt in my mind that you will take these responsibilities in the well-measured strides you have handled similar problems in the past. For this, I think you are deserving of the gratitude of the people throughout your respective areas.

And for industry, which if I might represent collectively for just a moment, let me thank you most sincerely for the fine work in conservation and law enforcement you have done in the past, and to wish you certain success for the great accomplishments which will belong to your ranks tomorrow.