

Supply—Indian Affairs

a forward step that has never been taken by this department in any other government—to lease some five million small potholes on the prairies. Why is this being done? It is to prevent their destruction by draining or filling. Pilot projects have been carried on for three years in order to work out administrative and legal techniques. This is to be a ten-year program starting in 1967, and under the program \$5 million will be spent annually. In other words, in the next ten years the department of northern affairs will spend some \$50 million to prevent the destruction of wildlife breeding grounds.

I have been talking only about potholes on the prairies, but additional expenditures on behalf of migratory birds will be necessary for the preservation, by purchase or long-term lease, of large marshes not only on the prairies but elsewhere in Canada. The marshes that are going to be leased or bought are important as breeding, resting and over-wintering areas. I believe this is one of the most important projects that any government has taken in sustaining and protecting wildlife.

Apart from this program—and many opposition members know this is true—because of the unending perseverance of the minister of northern development, and I know the perseverance he has shown, the new Canadian migratory game bird permit came into being by government order in council. I know how hard the minister worked privately to bring this into being. It was not an easy thing, let me tell hon. members.

To sportsmen this permit is known as the duck stamp, and it will pay a very important role in estimates of kill by species and location. This is a big step forward, because without these estimates it would be a little like management endeavouring to operate a business whose volume and distribution of sales were unknown. In other words, the department is taking a very forward-looking step in respect of wildlife management. I personally would like to congratulate the minister and his department for taking this step, and I know I speak on behalf of every member of this house and the sportsmen of Canada.

● (3:40 p.m.)

I shall not take much more time of the committee but, Mr. Chairman, I would like you to bear with me for a few minutes while I speak about a matter in my own riding that is very dear to my heart. It concerns the local duck hunting in Long Point Bay, one of the finest duck areas in Canada. Part of this large

[Mr. Roxburgh.]

hunting area is under provincial jurisdiction and is open for hunting to any person who pays a small fee. Most of the remaining area is either owned by clubs or by private persons, hunters being allowed to come in and shoot on a daily or yearly fee basis, or whatever the term may be. Certain sections of these marshes are baited, and it is felt by the owners of the marshes that shooting should be permitted within 200 yards of the baited areas rather than 500 yards, which is the law at present. Marsh owners and hunters strongly believe that this law is most unjust, especially for the large population living in southwestern Ontario where about two-thirds of the people of the province reside.

Do you realize, Mr. Chairman, that shooting over baited areas is carried on legally right across Canada, by shooting over corn and grain fields, over some fields specially planted for the purpose, with grain put out in the fields, thus making it impossible for conservation officers to prove anything? This in effect is shooting directly over baited areas, and not from 200 yards away as is suggested by Long Point Bay sportsmen and marsh owners.

Long Point Bay people believe, and I feel rightly so, that a strict bag control would be far more practical and in this area more easily controlled. There is little doubt that the law would receive full support from the marsh owners who would be willing to apply the law to the fullest to hunters on their property. In such a case not only would the provincial and federal governments not have two or three officers running around to see if they could find a grain of wheat that has been lying in the bottom of one of these pools for dear knows how long, but in addition the local marsh owners would be helping to apply the law. This is something worth considering.

I know the people there. They have commercial marshes for shooting but they are farming their marshes and they do not want them mined. They are practical conversationalists at heart, and the government would do well to learn from their experience.

Although migratory bird control is a federal responsibility, it can only be put into effect properly by working with the provinces, which is more or less what is happening now. However, if both federal and provincial wildlife conservation departments were sincerely interested in applying the law as it should be applied, it could be done much more easily and at very little extra cost.

Conservation officers should be moved around from area to area two weeks or so