

Supply—Northern Affairs

wildlife officials there felt the Canadian nesting grounds were being violated.

I have raised this question at the request of a number of persons, and I was pleased to note the importance attached to the subject by the hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre. I trust that when the minister replies he will inform us what is being undertaken by his wildlife survey branch and what the branch proposes to do to protect these very rare birds.

With those few remarks I resume my seat, much, I presume, to the pleasure of a number of members.

Mr. Dinsdale: I will reply to the specific questions which have been raised before this item carries. Perhaps I should deal first of all with the question raised by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate last evening when he discussed the problem of sea ducks in the province of Newfoundland. On investigating this matter I discovered that there are various names for the birds which come into the general category of sea ducks. I also recall that the hon. member for Trinity-Conception was in touch with me recently concerning this same difficulty.

There is an open season provided in Newfoundland which extends from November 14 to February 28. I also understand that the Newfoundland director of game has been requesting a change in the migratory birds protection program. I think that is about all the information I can give the hon. member at this time. We are aware of the problem, but because it involves various species of birds it is difficult to produce one simple solution. However, we do appreciate having this question brought to the attention of the committee at this time.

The hon. member for Moose Jaw-Lake Centre has raised a question in respect of the perennial difficulty regarding sandhill cranes. I have been personally acquainted with this problem over the years. The hon. member has outlined the difficulty from his own knowledge of the matter. The lesser and greater sandhill cranes are protected because of the possibility of their being mistaken for the whooping cranes. The population of lesser sandhill cranes, sometimes known as the little brown crane, has now reached approximately 200,000, whereas the population of greater sandhill cranes is down to about 2,000, which is hardly substantial enough to remove the threat of possible extinction.

For these reasons, and because of the similarity among these three types of birds, it has not been possible to allow any open season. I can assure the hon. member, however, that depredation studies are in progress. He has outlined some of the procedures

that have been tried, but I can inform him that during 1960 a co-operative study program was undertaken to determine the usefulness of exploders for scaring these birds. Exploders will be tested during 1961 to determine their usefulness in respect of sandhill cranes. Most of this program will be carried out in the Last Mountain lake region of Saskatchewan.

The hon. member for Kootenay West has asked for some information concerning studies going forward regarding the possible impact of the High Arrow dam project on wildlife. I am informed that our wildlife branch made an offer about a year ago to the director of the British Columbia game branch to co-operate with British Columbia in a study of this problem. A reply has been received, but at the moment no specific program has been launched and this subject is still in the discussion stage. Our wildlife people are aware of the difficulties and have been assured of co-operation from their counterparts in British Columbia.

I have received some information in regard to the Duck lake question which was raised by the hon. member for Kootenay West. I understand that British Columbia has taken no action and will make no decision regarding the land use at Duck lake until all details of the Columbia river development program are settled. The area concerned is British Columbia crown land; therefore we can do nothing without the concurrence of the British Columbia government.

The hon. member for Kootenay West raised a third question regarding the number of prosecutions under the Migratory Birds Convention Act in respect of the taking of egrets or egret feathers. We have no knowledge of any prosecutions, with the exception of the one case which was under discussion some time ago. I do not know whether the hon. member has any other information in this regard which he could bring to the attention of the committee, but I would invite him to do so in the event that he has.

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, I have no further information, but simply asked the question because I wondered whether the example set by one very important person had been followed by others.

Mr. Tucker: Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the minister for his explanation so far as birds in Newfoundland are concerned, but I should like to ask him whether the reason has resulted from written agreement or treaty with the United States, or is simply an agreement arrived at in Canada?

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Chairman, I understand in respect of this matter that the outer limits