

*Supply—Resources and Development*

**Mr. Winters:** Yes; there is an officer in Newfoundland to carry out investigations of wildlife.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Has he a staff?

**Mr. Winters:** He has not yet acquired a staff. Up to date his time has been largely spent in travelling to gather information.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Could I be given his name?

**Mr. Winters:** Would the hon. member let it go for the time being and I shall pass the information on to him.

**Mr. Browne (St. John's West):** Yes.

**Mr. Fulton:** This is one of the very important items in the estimates of this department. I am sure the minister also feels that it is important. The actual division between the federal authority and the provincial authority under this Migratory Birds Convention Act is a matter which I for one have never been able to get clearly in my mind. If it will not take too long I hope that when the minister deals with this item he will give us a brief outline of the division.

As I understand—I am referring particularly to the ducks and geese which are some of the migratory birds referred to in the act—one of the major difficulties is the fact that these birds are shot in the United States and in Mexico all the way up and down the flyways which they follow on their various migrations. Some of us in the province from which I come would like to see consideration given to the possibility of a restricted season for at least a year or two. I am not saying it is a firm opinion, but our people feel the possibility should be examined because a lessening of the number of ducks and geese is very noticeable. Naturally our game branch would not contemplate such a thing unless some similar or reciprocal arrangement could be made with the Mexican and American authorities, and those in other countries concerned. I saw figures recently in one of the newspapers of this country indicating that the number of ducks on this continent has gone down to an estimated 47 million when, at one time, I believe there were hundreds of millions. There appears to be a constant increase in the number of those sportsmen who take pleasure in this sport, probably the finest of all sports.

Measuring this against the decline in the number of birds, a decline which I believe was arrested for a while but has since begun to go on the downgrade again, one can see the seriousness of the problem. I have mentioned only one aspect of the matter. It is

not in any sense a recommendation, but I do know consideration has been given to the question whether or not it is desirable or necessary to declare a closed season.

Would the minister give his views in the matter, and tell us our relationship to the American and Mexican authorities in this sort of matter, and what has been proposed between the authorities in the dominion and the provinces in this connection?

**Mr. Blair:** I should like to add to what has been said by the hon. member for Kamloops, and make special reference to the season. Last year the season was set back from September 15 to October 15. In eastern Ontario this meant that all local ducks had departed by that time. The season was too late for the northern ducks coming in, with the result that sportsmen in eastern Ontario who were interested in duck hunting enjoyed practically no shooting.

As a matter of fact I was one of the duck hunters who went out on October 15. I went to a place where normally we had obtained a good bag. May I add that I believe the sportsmen adhered to the restrictions as to the number they should have shot either in one day or in a season. There were no ducks. Later in the season there was no possibility of getting northern ducks.

Another point is this—and I am glad the hon. member for Kamloops has mentioned it—that in this section of the country we are in some places on the flight of the ducks flying down the Atlantic seaboard. We read about ducks along the Atlantic seaboard being destroyed by patches of oil, and that sort of thing. I have always suspected that in Canada we are in the position of raising ducks, but that we do not get a chance to shoot them. We are raising them for somebody else to shoot.

I am not suggesting that we should have a wholesale slaughter of ducks, but I do feel that the ducks nest in Canada. The experience last year certainly showed that there was no possibility in eastern Canada of duck shooting. The other point is that when they fly into the United States they are on the wing and have banded together so that the American sportsmen can follow them all the way down through the United States to the gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean area. It is estimated that last year there were more than two million duck hunters in the United States.

I should like to see preservation of the duck population in this country, and I believe we should do everything possible to maintain it. At the same time our position seems foolish when it appears that we are making an attempt to preserve in this country a duck