

# ADDRESS

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given by

A. Kelly Evans

at a meeting called at  
McCONKEY'S, TORONTO,  
JUNE 7th, 1905

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to form an association for the  
better protection of the  
game and fish of the country,  
and printed, as possibly being  
of use to persons interested in the  
formation of branch associations.

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CHAIRMAN :

The Hon. Chief Justice Falconbridge



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MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,—I think the necessity for something being practically done in the direction of the better protection of the Game of this Province, will be admitted by all present, and it is with a view to this, that the meeting has been called.

I may say here, that invitations to attend this meeting have been as widely distributed as possible, yet as many keen sportsmen have no doubt, received no invitation, it is an immediate proof of the necessity of an Association being formed, in order that those interested in sport should be known to each other.

No invitation to attend the meeting was sent to Mr. Bastedo, or any members of the Ontario Government connected in any way with the Game Department, neither was it sent to any of the officials of the Dominion Government, as I think it will be apparent to you, that it would be unwise in the inception of this organization to be in any way connected with officialdom or with politics.

The Association, I think, will be, no doubt, only too glad to avail itself later on of any advice or experience its Committee may obtain from Chief Inspectors, etc., and on the other hand, the Association will, I believe, be only too glad from time to time to give the benefits of

its information to Chief Inspectors of the Department.

At this juncture, I might say, that anyone acquainted with the subject, making even a cursory examination of the reports of the Department of Fisheries, must come to the conclusion that a great deal has been effected by the Fisheries Overseers, but the amount of money paid some of them is ridiculously low, and one cannot expect a tremendous amount of energy to be displayed in these cases.

There are among them, unquestionably, many painstaking and enthusiastic officials, but I think you will all agree with me, there are many who do very little indeed. Where I refer later on to the subject of generally waking up the Inspectors, it is not done in a carping and antagonistic spirit at all.

I hope that the members of this Association will always endeavor to help the Inspectors in any way possible, but naturally, if they find Inspectors not doing their duty, they will be forced to take cognizance of the fact.

I will endeavor, if you will allow me fifteen minutes, to give a general outline of the good the Association might effect, in some directions supported by the recitation of facts well known to many of you, and the quotation of a few statistics which may be unknown to you.

In the first place, the form of the Association would be one with headquarters here in Toronto, having its own Officers and Executive and the formation gradually of Branch Associations in each Town in the Province, each with its own Officers and Executive, all working towards a common end.

It is confidently expected that such an Association will be successful in its objects, and that branches will spread rapidly in the other Provinces later on.

Now, it must be borne in mind, that were the class of sportsmen joining the Association restricted to one strata of society, very little could be done. It is therefore the plan that all those interested in sport, from the distinguished legal gentleman occupying the position of Chairman of this meeting down to a junior law student or bank clerk, or those occupied in manual work, farmers, mechanics, etc., will be invited to join, and the first good of such an Association would be the formation of a greater Free Masonry among sportsmen.

The annual subscription, however, must obviously be reduced to the very smallest nominal sum, say \$1.00, or if that is considered too much, even as low as 50 cents, so that the subscription could not possibly exclude anyone. I may feel confident in stating that any funds which may

be required for purposes outlined later on, will be readily collected from public-spirited citizens and sportsmen whose means allow.

I have been asked by one or two gentlemen present, when inviting them to attend this meeting, verbally, what good an Association such as I outline can do, and I will now suggest a few practical benefits, and no doubt others will occur to many of you.

There is probably no one present who goes fishing or shooting at all but has formed certain ideas and has had certain experiences, some of which might be useful, if known generally.

There has been, however, no place for the reception of such ideas or experiences up to date, and this Association would have in its headquarters a receiving place for *all* suggestions.

Many of those present have seen glaring instances of infractions of the Game Laws, and have either been too lazy to do anything in the way of reporting the same to the Department, or have had the natural disinclination that most people feel towards laying an information. If, however, a corporate body existed, to the Secretary of whom a complaint might be made with absolute confidence that the name of the informant would not be disclosed, I venture to say, that in a very short time the headquarters of

this Association would have a great deal of information which they could use through their Executive at the proper Government Department, bringing offenders to justice, and very materially waking up the Inspector in whose District such things occur.

There has been much discussion from time to time as to the open and close seasons of fish and game, and no doubt a great variety of opinions exist among sportsmen on these matters.

The formation of the Association will here be useful, as its headquarters will form a receiving ground for all those varied opinions which after being weighed by its Committee may be presented to the Department in such a way as to probably alter the present Game Laws to the material benefit of sport.

I regret now, to have to state one specific manner in which the Asssocation would be of use. I have been informed by two gentlemen, one of whom is present, and whose properties are separated by a hundred miles at least, that they have observed very glaring cases of netting for bass in and out of season, and they have refrained from reporting the same, being afraid that their places would be burned down in the winter.

Now, one of these gentlemen has expended a very large sum of money in the erection of an

hotel well known to many of you up north, and the other is a member of one of our best shooting clubs.

You can all easily appreciate such a condition of things, a man who has expended some forty or fifty thousand dollars in buildings away off on an island far from civilization, hesitates to take steps which might cause a fire started by an incendiary out of spite. But with the Association in existence, this gentleman need not appear in the matter at all, his information would be laid before the Secretary, action being taken directly by employing a private detective or through the Department and its Inspector. If I have heard, simply by "talking fishing" to friends, two such cases, surely there must be others in existence.

But gentlemen, the greatest benefit in my opinion the Association can perform, I have left till the last.

The bass fishing of Ontario may be roughly divided into two classes, first the large bodies of water, such as the Georgian Bay and Lake Nipissing, with a sparse resident population, and the more restricted waters, such as the Trent, the Kiawartha Lake, the Bay of Quinte, the Grand River, etc., etc., with thickly settled population.

First, in reference to the larger bodies of

water, some of you are probably not aware of an extract from an Order in Council passed the 30th day of May, 1904, which reads:

“The sale and export of speckled trout, black bass and maskinonge, is hereby prohibited for a period of five years from the date of this Order in Council, provided, however, that any person from a foreign country, fishing in the waters of the Province, and applying and paying for an Angler's permit, may, upon leaving the Province, when the same are accompanied by him, take with him the lawful catch of two days' fishing.”

It is very plain, that if this law is carried out, no tugs or other vessels can leave ports, on the Georgian Bay for instance, carrying black bass, speckled trout, or maskinonge, and therefore the incentive to the commercial fisherman taking these fish by nets or otherwise, is removed.

The Association, of course, can materially help in bringing this about. There will likely be a Branch of the Association in Midland, Penetanguishene, etc., etc., and if the proper Government official at these ports has not the time to inspect the vessels going out, I fancy some of our members might give us information as to what is going on.

Another source of information of use to protect the exporting of these fish will be, Ameri-



can sportsmen living in the towns to which our game fish have been heretofore shipped. Many of these gentlemen, no doubt, fish in our waters, and I think, by the Secretary of the Association getting in touch with Sporting Clubs in the States, we can soon get information, as to whether or no bass and speckled trout are coming into those points from Canada, and trace them from the other end as it were.

Now, as to the more restricted waters of the Trent, etc., here we come to a condition of things in which it is obviously impossible, unless we have the sympathy of the residents, to accomplish very much.

We cannot expect the Government to have an Inspector watching along the water front of every farm, neither can members of the Association do the same; it comes down to gaining the interests of the residents. How shall we do this? By, I believe, educating them. It would be a hard task indeed to get the average Ontario farmer to view the protection of the game fish from an altruistic sporting point of view, but if we can show him that his pocket is affected one way or the other, I think we can materially gain his interest and attention on this point. I will now bring forward certain interesting statistics bearing on the subject of the value of the game fish

to the people living along the waters where such fish exist.

I have here information culled from the Game Commissioners' Reports of the State of Maine.

In the year 1867, there were practically no sportsmen visiting the State of Maine, and yet owing to the residents living on the inland waters destroying the game out of season, the Commissioners had to report as follows:

“Our fresh water fisheries are, in general, economically valueless, or perhaps worse than valueless; and this on account of netting, spearing, fishing at any and all times.”

From 1867 to 1871, attention was paid by the Government to the protection of the fish, and from that period forward, a gradual widespread interest grew up in the work of the Game Commissioners, and in the year 1903 the Commissioners obtained a census by canvassers going from house to house and hotel to hotel in the interior of the State, and from these reports it was found that no less than 133,885 different people came into the inland territory of the State on some kind of vacation, exclusive remember, of those who visited the seaside resorts. At \$100 per head, which the Commissioners consider not an excessive average, this would mean over thirteen millions of dollars, earned outside of the State, brought to it, and left there.

They found in the State that 1,401 male help had been employed and 2,564 female help at good wages in consequence of these visitors, who came simply to fish and shoot, and there was paid out in wages alone the large sum of \$267,934.

Senator Fry, of whom you all know, has stated:

“In all the times of business depressions and distress, financial panics and consequent unemployment of labor, so seriously effecting the Country, the State of Maine has suffered much less than any other State in the American Union, mostly, if not entirely, due to the large amount of money left here by the fishermen, the summer tourist, and the fall hunter, the seeker after change, rest and recreation.”

Now, gentlemen, I want at this point to speak to those of you who have undoubtedly an objection to sportsmen from the States coming into our country. Those of you who have this idea, I think have formed it from the belief that these visiting sportsmen were materially injuring our fishing, etc.

If you consider the statistics just mentioned, you will see how impossible this is, for in Maine in the year 1867, the mere residents along the fishing waters had almost entirely destroyed the fish and game by fishing and shooting, &c., out of season, although no visitors were coming there

at all, and yet in the year 1903 on account of the fish and game being properly protected, there was good sport for over one hundred and thirty-three thousand people. The lesson here learned is that rod fishing or hunting does not reduce materially the game of the country, but what injures it, is the ordinary Game Laws not being carried out.

Now, to come back to the farmer living along the Trent. I refer to this particular stream, as I think so many present have fished in it. Most of you are aware that at Trent Bridge, a few years ago, there was splendid bass fishing. The little hotel at the Bridge was taxed to its utmost capacity, and Mr. White built quite a large boarding house, also taxed to its utmost capacity; a great many boats, a great many boatman were employed at good wages, the farmers in the neighborhood must have provided indirectly the food supplies, and the livery men at Havelock had a thriving business. How is it to-day? We all know the fishing has gone down materially, and very few are going there. Who has suffered by this? Undoubtedly the farmer, and this is only one instance out of a very many.

You, who have been to Trent, know perfectly well that it is common talk that spearing and netting out of season is indulged in by the people there, and this is what has destroyed the fish,

not persons going and fishing in the season with a rod.

How can the Association step in here?

A pamphlet can be prepared particularly for the farmer, and a well-known Toronto publisher, who, by-the-by, was born in the very State I have taken the statistics from, has promised me, that for this object, he will publish everything at cost.

These pamphlets could contain the statistics I have read to you, and many others which will clearly show the farmer that his interests are best being served by observing the laws himself, and seeing that his sons do the same.

These pamphlets would not cost more than a dollar a thousand, and I think \$10 so expended would do a tremendous amount of good. Members of the Association on their fishing trips could place in their dunnage bags a few of these pamphlets, and where the opportunity occurred, put them in the hands of the guides, farmers, hotel men, etc.

A well known gentleman connected with Massey Hall has promised me, at cost, the use of a cinemetograph during the coming winter, and I purpose myself to make a little itinerary of the Trent and other districts, advertising beforehand that a cinemetographic exhibition will be given free of cost, and that all the farmers

and their families are cordially invited to attend, and that before the exhibition a short address will be given on the subject of the value of the preservation of the game fish to them.

I believe others will volunteer their services in this direction, and by such lectures and by the distribution of such literature I feel confident we can gain the interests of the farmer. If we do this, we have practically won the battle, and the result will be in a few years magnificent fishing along our beautiful Trent River, the Kiawartha Lakes, and all through the smaller streams and lakes of the Province.

I have hardly referred to game at all, other than the game fish of the Province, but I think some of the uses of the Association given, will apply equally to all game.

I, however, hope that some of those present who have had wide experience in shooting will give their views. I see many well-known sportsmen present, among whom, Mr. John Maughan, Mr. Christopher Robinson, and others, and I hope Mr. John Maughan and Mr. Christopher Robinson may give us their views on the subject.

In conclusion I would thank you for the attention you have given me, and end by saying that I believe with proper protection given the game and fish, this Province would become the Scotland of the North American Continent, and that

vast sums of money would be left here by visiting sportsmen from the great country to the south, hotels would be scattered all over the Georgian Bay and the country generally, and all classes of the community would benefit by the money left in the Province.

When the timber is once cut down it cannot be replaced for many years, if at all; when the ore is taken from the ground, it is gone for good; but with the fish and game of this Province properly protected, we have an unending important revenue.



NOTE.—Any question on the  
subject can be addressed to the  
acting secretary,

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25 Front St. East,  
Toronto.



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