

CONSERVATION NEWS AND NOTES

SAMUEL R. MADISON, *Chairman Conservation Committee*

This column misses your retiring conservation committee chairman, Walter Elwood. We know he deserves a rest after his years of strenuous and excellent endeavor on behalf of the Federation, but we hate to see him go.

The Legislative session is on in Albany with the usual mad rush toward adjournment underway. At present it looks as though the Federation will have several things for which to be thankful.

The Hammond-Ostrander resolution which would amend Article 14, Section 2 of the State Constitution has passed the Senate and Assembly. It strikes out the provision that the legislature may provide for use of forest preserve lands for the construction of reservoirs to regulate the flow of streams. This is the result of the fight, now several years old, to prevent the construction of the Panther Mountain Dam on the south branch of the Moose River in Herkimer County. Two years ago the Legislature enacted a bill directing the Black River Regulating District to abandon the Panther Mountain project, and the law is now being tested in the courts.

The Constitution since 1913 has contained a provision permitting the flooding of 3% of the 2,500,000 acres of forest preserve for reservoirs regulating the flow of streams. The Hammond-Ostrander amendment would repeal this provision. It would make it impossible to undertake a stream control project in the forest preserve without amendment of the Constitution.

The Senate approved the measure by a vote of 49 to 5. The vote in the Assembly was 131 to 14. But we must not be too elated over this success. Before the amendment becomes a part of the Constitution it must be approved again by the Legislature which is to be elected this fall, and by the voters at the 1953 November election.

A bill which makes it unlawful to pollute the Hudson or Mohawk rivers by dumping or throwing oil, acid, sludge, cinders or ashes from vessels has been passed in both the Senate and Assembly.

The fate of the Wood Duck bill (Senate Int. 2767, Print 2956) — about which several conservation bulletins have been issued — is still uncertain at this writing. It provides that there shall be no open season on the Wood Duck or any specie of eider duck before 1955. It has passed in the Senate, thanks to the whole hearted support of Senator W. Stokes, Chairman of the Senate Conservation Committee. We are hopeful for its passage in the Assembly. The battle will be over by the time you read this. Perhaps the deciding factor will be the number of letters which you write to your legislators. If you have responded generously by pen, phone or wire to Bulletins 44 and 45 it should be a success. The letters we ask you to write are important: Stokes was for the bill. It took no urging to get him to introduce it. But even after it had successfully passed the Senate, he commented upon the number of letters he had received in its support. Incidentally, whether we win or lose, it would be fine if some readers would send him a thank you note for his support.

The bill for the regulation of timber cutting on private commercial lands (Senate Int. 2041, Print 2174) will die in committee, according to reports.

As a final note, no attempt has been made to take the Snowy Owl off the protected list. Let's hope that that battle has been won.