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Remarks

by

U.S. SENATOR ROBERT C. BYRD

at the

Leetown Fish Hatchery

October 21, 1967

Leetown, West Virginia

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My friends, it is always a pleasure to take part in the dedication of a new federal facility.

And this particular dedication gives me great pleasure because this complex of facilities is more than just a place where fish are hatched and reared.

Rather, it is a complex which represents the latest advances in the field of fish husbandry.

It combines well planned production facilities with an internationally respected research center.

But before I go into further detail about this particular center I should like to present a little bit of

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background about our national fish hatchery system and its importance.

Since its inception in the late 19th century our fish hatchery system has increased in numbers, in productive capacity and in the quality of fish grown.

Today there are some 100 federal fish hatcheries which are supplemented by about 500 state-run hatcheries.

There has been a greatly increased interest in all types of outdoor recreation during the years since World War II and fishing -- along with all other outdoor sports -- has burgeoned apace.

The recent National Survey of Fishing and Hunting gives us some indication of the size of this increase.

It states that some 33 million Americans participated in these sports during 1965 and, in so doing, spent some \$4 billion.

Without the help of our federal and state hatcheries, mother nature would be hard pressed to meet the need for more and more fish.

As an example of the tremendous growth of sport fishing in recent years, let me cite as an example the experience of our own state of West Virginia.

West Virginia's waters are stocked with fish produced both naturally and from State and Federal Hatcheries. Almost 450,000 pounds of fish, mostly trout, were planted by state and federal officials.

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About half of these fish -- 225,000 pounds -- were produced right here at Leetown, at the Bowden Hatchery near Elkins, and at the White Sulphur Springs Hatchery in Greenbrier County.

And great though this volume of fish may seem, the federal allocation of fish for West Virginia waters is three times greater today than it was four years ago in 1963.

So, as one can see, these hatcheries play a tremendous role in keeping our state's anglers happy and their catches bountiful.

Now, I would like to tell you a little more about this particular hatchery. It is a fine one indeed.

If you look into the water in the raceways, you will be able to see a number of species of trout. And near where we are standing, there are a number of large ponds that produce other fish such as bass and sunfish.

These fish are grown in the newly constructed hatchery building. This structure incorporates all the latest developments in fish husbandry, and its staff is able to produce the highest quality fish under the most carefully controlled conditions.

The fish begin life as eggs, spawned in other hatcheries which maintain specially selected brood fish. These eggs are placed in special tanks until they hatch into tiny, helpless, near

invisible, fry.

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These small fish are then carefully nurtured. They are fed a nutritionally balanced diet, and when they are large enough to live outside, they are moved to one of the large raceways for further growth.

When they have reached a sufficient age and size best suited to survive in the wild, they are released into the state's streams and lakes.

From there, well, that's up to the angler's to determine -- whether these fish become a fish dinner or, instead, perhaps the dinner of some other fish.

But the Leetown Hatchery does more than just to produce and rear fish. Its internationally known Eastern Fish Disease

Laboratory has provided much of the information available to scientists on fish diseases.

Experts in the diagnosis and treatment of the illnesses that plague fish have been trained here for service throughout the U.S. and the world.

As an example of its work, last July the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife proposed a new regulation designed to prevent the importation and spread of two particularly dangerous trout diseases. Although the initial responsibility for examining these fish will reside in the country of origin, we must have facilities and people to run spot checks to see that the regulation is enforced.

As a further ~~COPY~~ example of its work, many states will soon enact regulations requiring inspection and certification of interstate transfers of fish or fish eggs. The Federal Government must be prepared to assist the Bureau in performing this vital function. Personnel here at Leetown will probably be called upon to play a major role in this regard.

Other activities are also carried on at the Laboratory. The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife uses this hatchery as a base of operations for a number of its in-service training schools where Bureau employees, persons from state conservation agencies, and personnel

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of foreign governments can be trained in modern fish growing methods.

This is important because sport fishing in West Virginia and across the nation is not only fun; it is also big business. According to the National Fishing and Hunting Survey I mentioned earlier some \$4 billion was spent in the pursuit of these sports. This money generally goes to those areas where good fishing, or good hunting, is found.

In the days ahead, even more fishermen will be participating in this great outdoor pursuit, and, as their numbers increase, our waters must of necessity, be managed to provide the necessary fish.

I am sure that our National Hatchery system in general, and the Leetown Fish

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Hatchery in particular, will do their
part to see that these demands are met.

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