

Conservation Society Opposes Bills

At a marathon, six-hour meeting in College, Alaska, lasting until early Friday morning, the Board of Directors of the Alaska Conservation Society voted to support Governor Hickel's stand against two bills that would split the present Board and Department of Fish and Game.

Members of the Society's governing body said they did not oppose the dividing of the Department in principle, but strongly objected to the way SB 56 and SB 57 allot management responsibilities and regulatory authority.

Chief item in question was the regulation of anadromous fish. SB 57 would give all responsibility to manage salmon, except landlocked populations, to the Board of Commercial Fisheries, despite the high and rapidly growing value of these fish to sport fishermen.

Serious objection was raised also to the definition of commercial fish in SB 57. Any fish, when commercially exploited, would fall under the jurisdiction of the Board of Commercial Fisheries according to this bill. Therefore, lake trout, whitefish, dolly varden, and pike all could be regulated by the Commercial Fisheries Board.

In other action on wildlife conservation bills, the Alaska Conservation Society voted unanimously to oppose SB 50, which would give a Board of

Professional Guides authority to set up areas where only one designated guide could take out hunters. The Society also opposed SB 51, which would force non-residents to hire guides before hunting mountain sheep, bears, and other species of big game.

The Board of Directors of the Society, composed of members from Ketchikan, Juneau, Kenai, College, and Fairbanks elected Bob Weeden as President of ACS for 1967. Dr. Weeden, a charter member of the Society, was editor of the News Bulletin for six years. He lives in College. Dan Swift, Geophysicist at the University of Alaska, was elected Vice President, a post he held also in 1965.

Acting on recommendations from Board Member Mrs. Dixie Baade of Ketchikan, the Society passed a resolution to request the U.S. Forest Service to implement sections of its Multiple Use Management Plans which would preserve scenic and recreation values of the Inside Passage.

Another important question, that of the activities of the

Atomic Energy Commission in Alaska, received detailed attention. The Board voted to make an official statement opposing the use of National

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Society . . .

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Wildlife Refuges, National Parks, and other lands dedicated to conservation of renewable resources, for atomic experimentation.

"We realize that top-level decisions already have been made that affect Amchitka Island," said President Bob Weeden. "We strongly urge the Atomic Energy Commission to take measures to reduce the possibility of losses to sea otter and other resources of this Island to a minimum.

"Probably the most effective step would be for the AEC to finance a team of competent biologists, working on Amchitka, to advise the Commission on specific actions to make inevitable damages as slight as possible."

The Board also passed a resolution asking the Atomic Energy Commission to delay further action on the proposed test site near the Utukok River in the Alaskan Arctic until careful study had been made of the effects of potential radiation contamination and other disturbances on the huge caribou herd in this area.

"We know that the main calving grounds of a herd of 250,000 caribou is in the Utukok River - Noluck Lake - Lookout Ridge area," said Weeden. "We know that lichens concentrate radioactive elements, and that caribou form the link whereby these sources of radiation, in concentrated form, get to people. It seems wise to study this situation pretty carefully before committing ourselves to a major testing program in the Arctic."