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RESTORED CANAL LOCK CALLED
A MONUMENT TO CONSERVATION

The restored lock in the Albemarle and Chesapeake Canal, between Back Bay, Va., and upper Currituck Sound, N. C., should be regarded as a monument to the conservation of waterfowl. Paul G. Redington, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, emphasized this as one of the speakers at the dedication of the lock held recently under the auspices of local chapters of the Izaak Walton League of America.

Intended primarily to eliminate strong currents in the canal, the lock, says the Biological Survey chief, is expected to have far-reaching effects in checking pollution of Upper Currituck Sound, N. C., and its headwaters known as Back Bay, in Virginia.

Years ago these waters were pure. Filled with aquatic plants, they constituted one of the most important wintering grounds for coots, ducks, geese, swans, and other wild fowl.

During many years, even of that period, Upper Currituck Sound was connected with Norfolk Harbor. The link, however, was a small and tortuous canal provided with a tidal lock. Consequently it carried little if any pollution to the sound. Under legislation by Congress in 1912 the canal was widened and deepened.

About five years later the lock was left open, and in 1922 it was removed. As early as 1920 the effects of pollution became noticeable: the water of Currituck Sound gradually became more saline and turbid; the water plants failed; the fishing industry steadily dwindled; and a great part of the wild fowl were forced to seek other feeding grounds.

Realizing the need for correcting these conditions, interested sportsmen and representatives of navigation interests, in cooperation with the Biological Survey, participated in hearings before boards of Federal engineers and finally before the Rivers and Harbors Committee of Congress. They pointed out the adverse effects that removal of the lock had had on shipping, fishing, hunting, and on the economic welfare of the entire region. These efforts resulted in the restoration of the lock.

The destructive process, Mr. Redington points out, had continued through many years, and it is probable that recovery will be gradual. Conservationists earnestly hope, however, that the unfavorable conditions will not continue long, and that the restoration will be complete.

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