

Biology Building
June 15, 1932

Dr. Carl J. Drake
Dept. of Entomology and Zoology
Iowa State College
Ames, Iowa

Dear Dr. Drake:

I am inclosing a copy of President Hughes' late letter to me, should you not have one. You will also note carbons of letters to Dr. Whitlock and Mr. Bennett.

It is evident that I have overstepped in making the commitments that I did to Dr. Whitlock and Mr. Bennett. I don't know whether my indiscreetness has done any real harm or not; aside from the technical complications that might be productive of trouble, I am most afraid that you may have got the impression that I wish to take things too much into my own hands.

This, should there be doubt, is not the case. I have no desire to trespass upon your province; I did not know exactly, however, where mine left off and where yours began. Indeed, I had looked upon the selection of personnel and getting things started in absentia not as a prerogative, but as a somewhat inconvenient responsibility. I do not recall to what extent, if any, the procedure of hiring men was discussed in our last conversations, but since we seemed in agreement on the wide variety of topics brought up in relation to the Iowa program, I suppose that I simply fell into the error of taking over-much for granted. An error on my part I admit it to be and I regret that it happened; that, on the other hand, does not solve the question as to what is now to be done.

Regardless of what official heresies I may have committed, I do not want lost sight of two primary purposes I had in mind. In the first place, Dr. Whitlock has plans for the summer which are contingent upon whether or not he works with me or does something else; in the former event he would spend the summer studying pheasants with Wight, which is my idea of the best possible training under the circumstances, and which might be compared to a period of apprenticeship--and at no official expense--previous to his taking over his duties. Plainly, before he can be expected to go ahead, he ought to know something as to where he stands.

In the second place, the waterfowl nesting studies cannot be postponed until into the summer if much headway is to be made this season. There is immediate need of information on wild duck nesting, habits and requirements, a need accentuated by the present waterfowl crisis and by the present program of the state of Iowa buying up and restoring breeding grounds without really knowing what constitutes breeding grounds. Then again, I know from my own experience that the first season's nesting studies with a given wild species

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is apt to run more to mistakes than to accomplishments. I would like Bennett (and on the basis of Professor Guthrie's opinion and my own impression I do not think we would do badly in choosing Bennett) to get busy at once and make most of his mistakes this summer, so that next year we would have a good chance for getting some significant results.

I hope, Dr. Drake, that my lack of understanding the college regulations has not caused you serious embarrassment. Perhaps when I am at last on the ground and in a position to discuss with you personally the ways and means of making sundry important moves, I may be better able to familiarize myself with current pitfalls before actually stumbling into them.

Yours sincerely,

Paul L. Errington
In Charge, Quail Investigation

Incl.