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Our Fish and Game Situation; Little Time for Exercise; Good State for Athletics; Bird Story

Strom Thurmond

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"He that will make good use of any part of his life must allow a large portion of it to recreation." -- Locke.

The quotation from John Locke is placed at the head of this column not only because I believe it has merit, but because it may help to furnish Mr. Scoop Latimer with justification for dashing off into foreign waters on pleasure bent, while other less fortunate individuals remain at home and write his column for him.

All of Scoop's readers will agree that recreation should form an important part of any successful life, and none of us begrudge him his well-earned rest, even if it does mean that comparative strangers will occupy his corner in the Greenville News for a time.

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OUR FISH AND GAME SITUATION

I know of nothing more important for South Carolina sports fans to think about than our fish and game situation.

The condition of our wildlife resources is unsatisfactory. Every true sportsman in the State knows this to be a fact.

Some of our counties are carrying on good wildlife programs, designed to improve the situation in their own localities, but the conservation program for the State as a whole is below standard. I am one of those who believes that steps should be taken to correct that situation.

No state in the entire nation has enjoyed a greater supply of wildlife in the past than South Carolina. Today, that abundance
is being threatened. The reason seems to be that we have permitted ourselves to remain near the bottom of list among states in the extent of our game conservation program.

The preservation of our wildlife resources is important, not only from a financial standpoint, but also as a means of improving the health and happiness of our people. A plentiful supply of fish and game encourages the hardy and healthful life in the open. Those who live close to nature, and who enjoy the bounties of God-given sunshine and fresh air, are healthier people -- mentally, physically, and spiritually.

For this reason, I have constantly plugged for legislation to improve and preserve our wildlife. I favor a non-political fish and game commission, such as has recently been proposed in the General Assembly. I believe such a commission could and should undertake to awaken our people to the need for prompt and concerted action to preserve our game supply for the years to come.

As one who grew up on the farm, with plenty of opportunity to bring down a few birds now and then, and occasionally a rabbit or a squirrel, I know what depletion of our game supply will mean. Every South Carolinian who follows the rod and gun should get behind the effort to improve the situation.

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LITTLE TIME FOR EXERCISE

My job as Governor has been a great joy to me. My only regret is that it's more than a full-time job, and therefore affords little time for a horseback ride, a long swim, a fast game of tennis, or some of the other forms of recreation and exercise of which I am fond.

As a means of getting exercise when time is short, I find that a good fast walk of a mile or so before breakfast or at night is a good substitute for more active sports. This may be because I was
fond of track at Clemson, and used to run long distances for the fun of it.

Which reminds me that some time ago a friend, while introducing me to an audience, commented that I had made the track team back in college days, and that I had been running for something ever since. And pretty close to the truth, he was, at that. At least I have given my entire life to the public.

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A GOOD STATE FOR ATHLETICS

South Carolina is a good state for athletics. There must be something about our climate or in the make-up of our people that is just naturally conducive to the growth and development of first-rate athletes. While no official data is available on this subject, I would venture to guess that this State ranks very near the top in the number of outstanding sports figures who grow up within its borders.

This is especially true in the baseball world, where our contribution has regularly been very high. Large numbers of major-league baseball players have come from the amateur teams in the upper part of the State, around the Greenville area. This should be a matter of pride for all South Carolinians.

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A BIRD STORY

All fishermen are familiar with the accusation which always follows your claim that the fish got away, that of the "fish story." As a result of a recent quail-hunting experience of mine, Mrs. Thurmond now insists that the "bird story" may be just as reprehensible as the "fish story."

On a two-day hunting trip, I had good luck the first day, getting a number of birds. On the second day, however, no one in the party had any luck, until finally I did manage to bag one bird.
There happened to be one lonely little well in the wide-open ground around us, and my bird chose to fall smack into it.

With a square-mile to choose from, he fell into a 20-foot well, and we couldn’t get him out.

Believe it or not, this “bird story” is the absolute truth.

Whether you hunt and fish or not, I would like to encourage every South Carolinian to spend as much time as possible in the open. In these times of great stresses and strains, it is a wholesome thing to "get back to nature" when you can, even if you must limit yourself to a walk along a country lane.