

Along Nature's Trail

By Ken McLeod

was pointed out in our last column that the discussion of the pollution problem of the Klamath River, becomes involved with the definition of words, this was especially true in the case of the pollution problem of the waters of the Klamath River. These people chose to draw a fine line in the definition of the word — pollution.

When the North Coastal Regional Water Pollution Board of California came out and made the flat statement that their investigations showed the fact there was no pollution problem of Klamath River waters, this organization chose to draw a fine line in its definition of the word "pollution." The action of the California Pollution Board is concurred in by the Oregon State Sanitary Authority, though quite in the positive attitude of the California spokesman.

When the Oregon State Sanitary Authority and the North Coastal Regional Water Pollution Board of California both chose to follow the basic example of the fabled ostrich and hide their heads in the sands of semantics, they knew that they were fooling no one. They deliberately chose to avoid a frank discussion of the pollution problem, closed their eyes and turned their backs upon a subject that a writer has listened to discussed "bull-session" by technical experts while having a cup of coffee. From listening to the discussion of the Klamath River problem by independent consultants, sanitary engineers as well as chemical researchers, I thought the Klamath problem was an open book until I watched how expertly state agencies ducked their responsibilities.

One particular point about the Portland conference that impressed me was the fact that local, non-technical, community groups who are vitally concerned with the pollution problems of the Klamath Basin were not asked to offer assistance on the project, nor even made aware of its progress. I note that when the March '53 meeting was held here in the Klamath Basin to formulate a program of action for the 1953 study, there were no representation on the part of committees of the Klamath Chamber of Commerce and other groups which are directly concerned with water resources of the Basin. When the final conference was held in Portland there was no invitation extended for Community representation.

At the March meeting, I noted that the Klamath County Health Department was represented but were not present at the Portland conference. I naturally wondered why and especially so after several had me. The answer is, the local health unit merely sat in on the March meeting as an observer they had no part in the study, do not possess the equipment necessary for the facilities of making bacteriological examinations of water. The local health unit looks to the services of a State Sanitary Engineer located at Grants Pass to handle questions of this nature so from this angle the local health unit was able to make no contribution to the study with the consequence that when the final meeting was held in Portland they were not extended an invitation to attend.

At the Portland meeting, the State Sanitary Authority, stressed the fact that they felt this problem of the Klamath River was really

a problem for the Klamath River Basin Commission and the Sanitary Authority would extend all aid possible to the newly formed Commission, however, I noted no representation on the part of the

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Commission, and while I have not had the opportunity to check, it would be my guess that the Klamath Basin Commission was not invited.

At the March '53 meeting the spokesman for the State Sanitary Authority called attention to the

proposed formation of a Klamath River Basin Commission in Oregon and a similar commission in California. These commissions would act in cooperation in developing a plan for use of the waters of the Klamath Basin. It was then indicated that survey data of the type

proposed for the study of the waters of the Klamath River by the sanitary agencies would prove to be valuable background information for these commissions' consideration of water use and resource development. He further agreed that this basin study could logically

form the basis for a cooperative state-federal comprehensive report on water pollution control but was of the firm opinion that the development of such a report should be timed to dovetail into the findings, conclusions and overall activities of the Klamath River Basin Com-

missions of the two states. From all appearances, therefore, it would appear that the Portland meeting to put the Klamath River pollution study into the scientific "deep freeze" was designed to be an exclusive party. The fewer the better in attendance at the obse-

quies. What about this writer you may wonder — was he asked? The answer is — No! Who wants an irascible, dissenting obstructionist watching the party? A fairy told me so I told one of our state officials tell the boys I would be present.

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