

President Roosevelt Acts to Save  
**THE PEOPLE'S FOREST**  
Among the Border Lakes

**By Ernest C. Oberholtzer**

President, Quetico-Superior Council  
Associated with Izaak Walton League of America



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By an Executive Order creating a Quetico-Superior Committee, President Roosevelt declares support to preservation of the famous border lakes region between Minnesota and Ontario. This recognition, together with the unanimous stand of the International Joint Commission against the dam builders, lends new courage all along the front.

**I**N THE spring of 1909 President Theodore Roosevelt, by Executive Proclamation, established Superior National Forest. Or June 30, 1934, almost exactly a quarter century afterwards, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by Executive Order, creates a Committee for the purpose of facilitating a larger Superior National Forest and of establishing by treaty with Canada a wilderness sanctuary embracing the border waters and their tributaries from Rainy Lake east to Lake Superior.

The Committee is called the Quetico-Superior Committee and the program contemplates a vast peace memorial in the two countries. There are five members, all friendly to the program and charged with the duty of consulting and advising with Federal and State agencies to promote its fulfillment. In other words, the present Administration at Washington recognizes the national character and importance of the border lakes region and is ready, so far as the lands and waters on the Minnesota side are concerned, to carry out the proposed plan of conservation as a federal project at federal expense.

The contemplated program has been a matter of common knowledge since the autumn of 1927, when it was approved by the U. S. Department of Agriculture and adopted at Duluth by representatives of the National Izaak Walton League and of all the leading conservation bodies of the state. It has

since received widespread recognition. Three state legislatures have memorialized Congress in its favor. Both Congress and the Minnesota legislature have passed protective Acts in furtherance of its principles.

Finally, the International Joint Commission, after an investigation from a strictly economic point of view covering a period of nearly nine years, while leaving the way open for future consideration of moderate power development in aid of present industries, not only rejects all present plans for additional water storage but declares that:

"The boundary waters referred to in the Reference and the territory tributary thereto are of matchless beauty and of inestimable value from the recreational and tourist viewpoints. The Commission fully sympathizes with the objects and desires of the State of Minnesota and the Quetico-Superior Council and others who take the position that nothing should be done that might mar the beauty or disturb the wildlife of this last great wilderness of the United States. The Commission feels that it is impossible to over-state the recreational and tourist value of this matchless playground. Its natural forests, lakes, rivers and waterfalls have a beauty beyond description, and nothing should be done to destroy their charm.

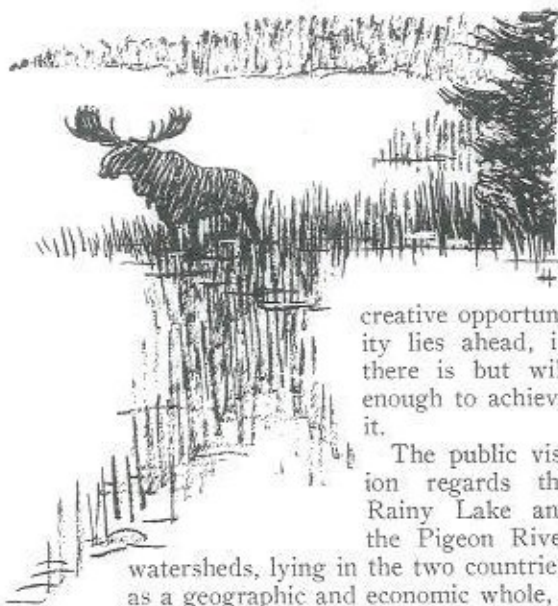
"The Commission also sympathizes with the aims and the objects of those who advocate that this beautiful natural sanctuary, emblematic of peace and unmarred by the hand of man, should be set apart as a memorial park to commemorate the more than a century of peace, good will and common ideals that have existed between the English-speaking peoples that live side by side on the northern half of this continent; and the Commission is particularly desirous that nothing contained in this Report should present any obstacle to or in any way interfere with the Governments of the two countries entering into a treaty for this purpose."

Thus, after nearly ten years of incessant struggle, the public groups seeking permanent protection of the area of the border lakes and their tributaries have won their way to the threshold of their constructive program. If they can secure a treaty with Canada in ad-

advance of new projects for exploiting the border waters and forests, the wilderness will be safeguarded once for all for the common good. Their vision has the blessing and backing of the President of the United States. A real







creative opportunity lies ahead, if there is but will enough to achieve it.

The public vision regards the Rainy Lake and the Pigeon River watersheds, lying in the two countries, as a geographic and economic whole, a precious endowment, requiring public control and uniform measures for protection. From every point of view—

economic, scientific, historical, recreational, inspirational—this land of wooded lakes and streams is a superb natural endowment of the two neighboring countries—practically a monopoly resource. It is not only one of the rarest regions on the continent but, though lying close to one quarter of the population of the United States, is one of the least suitable for settlement or industrial use. It is a natural wilderness; all its economic and social value depends upon maintaining its wilderness character. If that character can be perpetuated, there is no longer any doubt but that local industry dependent upon the forest can be restored and made permanent, while at the same time a vital human need of the present day will be served in exemplary fashion.

Men want the simplicity, the healing peace, the imaginative stimulus of the wilderness. They want it more now than ever—the poor more than the rich—and they want it nearby, where its enjoyment can be had without restriction and at low cost. The border lakes and their tributaries are destined to become the summer habitat of a large portion of the vacation population of the Middle-West.

Between the wilderness and any large public use, of course, there is a natural contradiction. Only, however, if the use develops haphazard, according to each private notion, without any large controlling plan that views the region as a whole. Given such a plan, reinforced by public ownership of the greater portion of the land, it should be possible to zone the region as a whole, (1) so that the facilities for the public, the hotels, sanatoria, camps, community and charitable clubs, summer homes, cabins and shelters, can be concentrated on the outermost lakes, those already in contact with roads and railroads, (2) so that hunting seasons in the outer zone may be permitted for the utilization of surplus game, and yet (3) so that the greater portion of the area may be kept as a wilderness sanctuary—a section of original America—for replenishment of the very values that have drawn visitors to the region. The majority of these visitors undoubtedly will be content to live on the fringe of the wilderness, where every attraction except remoteness will be available. For the more venturesome there are the natural highways, with which the whole area is threaded—the immemorial canoe routes.

That it will take intelligent and careful planning to reconcile the various uses of the region goes without saying. It will require also the utmost of patience, fairness and firmness, even where there is no selfish obstruction, to deal adequately with the problems of existing industry, of private hopes and ambitions, and of local necessities. It would be difficult to find in the United States, however, another area affording similar opportunities for coordinated Federal activities, promising so much local relief and such high social and economic benefit at this particular time.

The remarkable scope of the work can only be hinted at in a brief survey of this sort. It is like building a vast cathedral. Many workmen are concerned. Many needs will be served. The program represents the aspirations of millions of citizens, who lament the waste of the past and who long for secure enjoyment of some part of their original birthright.

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## Executive Order

### Creation of the Quetico-Superior Committee

WHEREAS the Quetico-Superior Council, associated with the Izaak Walton League of America, has formulated a program for the establishment of a wilderness sanctuary in the Rainy Lake and Pigeon River watersheds through which runs the international boundary line between Canada and the United States; and

WHEREAS this program has been endorsed by numerous organizations interested in the preservation of wildlife and the conservation of the few remaining tracts of American wilderness; and

WHEREAS it has been proposed that the wilderness sanctuary should be dedicated as a peace memorial to the service men of both countries who served as comrades in the Great War; and

WHEREAS the Congress of the United States, in the act of July 10, 1930 (ch. 881, 46 Stat. 1020), has given legislative effect to its principles "of conserving the natural beauty of shore lines (in these watersheds) for recreational use" and of preserving "the shore lines, rapids, waterfalls, beaches, and other natural features of the region in an unmodified state of nature"; and

WHEREAS the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, in its administration of existing law, can give further effect to the aforementioned principles; and

WHEREAS, certain executive departments and administrative agencies of the Government of the United States, the Department of State, the Treasury Department, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Labor, the Emergency Conservation Work Administration, and the Subsistence Homesteads Administration, and the State of Minnesota will be concerned in whatever performance there may be of the Quetico-Superior Council program;

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of and pursuant to the authority vested in me as President of the United States I hereby appoint a committee, to be known as the Quetico-Superior Committee, to consult and advise with the various Federal departments and agencies concerned and with the State of Minnesota, and to make such recommendation from time to time as it deems proper.

The committee shall be composed of E. C. Oberholtzer, S. T. Tyng, C. S. Kelly (who have been invited to serve and have accepted), 1 person designated by the Secretary of Agriculture and 1 person designated by the Secretary of the Interior. The committee shall serve for a period of 4 years and without compensation. Any vacancy occurring in the committee shall be filled in the manner in which the members are appointed.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.

The White House,  
June 30, 1934.

[No. 6783]

*Editor's Note:* The three members named by the President to serve on the Quetico-Superior Council Committee are Ernest C. Oberholtzer of Minneapolis, Sewell T. Tyng of New York City, and Charles S. Kelly of Chicago.

Members of the Izaak Walton League are well acquainted with Mr. Oberholtzer's devotion to the border lakes region. In addition to being one of its founders, he has served as President of the Quetico-Superior Council, associated with the Izaak Walton League, since its organization in 1927.

Sewell Tyng, an attorney of New York, serves as counsellor to the Quetico-Superior Council, and has rep-

resented the border lakes cause on many occasions when public rights were on trial.

Charles S. Kelly is a Chicago attorney but formerly resided in Minneapolis where he helped to found the Council. He has rendered unstinted and distinguished service in the long campaign to protect the north woods country.

The Secretary of Agriculture has designated E. W. Tinker, Regional Forester, Milwaukee, as fourth member of the committee. The fifth member is Doctor Robert Marshall, official forester to the U. S. Indian Bureau, a recognized national champion of wilderness values.

