

Comment by the Editor

THE WILD LIFE SCHOOL

"I salute you and your collegiate colleagues on having started the first School of Wild Life Protection and Propagation ever started anywhere on this round earth, so far as I am aware", wrote W. T. Hornaday, Director of the Zoological Park in New York City, to George Bennett in response to an invitation to become a patron of the school. "I wish for the Founders of this school all the success and permanent satisfaction that your enterprise so fully deserves."

Inspired by the beauty of the landscape and charmed with the story of nature as revealed by the scientists at the Sunday session of the Iowa Conservation Association held on Pike's Peak near McGregor in July, 1918, Mr. Bennett suggested that a part of the program for the following year be designated as a "Summer School of Wild Life Protection and Propagation".

For several years he had been dreaming of a school of conservation for people interested in nature study. With a zeal that never relaxed, he aroused the interest of conservationists everywhere. The wild life program of the Association in 1919 met such an enthusiastic response that the American School of Wild Life Protection and Propagation was established in 1920.

At the first session of this unique venture, which lasted a whole week in August and attracted students from distant parts of the country, Dean George F. Kay and Professor Bohumil Shimek of the State University of Iowa, Professor L. H. Pammel of Iowa State College, Professor Charles R. Keyes of Cornell College, and Rev. Le Roy T. Weeks of Emmetsburg constituted the faculty. Year after year these men and other distinguished naturalists have returned to the campus of the Wild Life School on the Heights above McGregor. And year by year the enrollment has increased.

From the beginning the policy of the school has been not to "burden the minds of students with technical detail or puzzling formulae" but to furnish an "intimate knowledge of the out-door world" so that "an intense love of wild life everywhere and under every condition" may be kindled. Among the hills and valleys of the "Switzerland of Iowa", students of various ages and many walks in life — business men, school teachers, doctors, lawyers, ministers, stenographers, sportsmen, farmers, nurses, club women, college students, boy scouts, and camp fire girls — all have found pleasure and inspiration in observing the birds and flowers, the rocks and streams, historical sites and the archeological evidence of an ancient civilization. The region abounds in the treasures of nature no longer ignored.

The early promise of the Wild Life School is finding rich fulfillment in the breadth of its influence. Not only

has it taught the lessons of conservation to hundreds of people, but its existence has had much to do with the establishment of a national Wild Life Refuge in this wonderland of the upper Mississippi, where the white man first saw Iowa. As for McGregor, its location in this natural paradise is far more important than its commercial potentiality ever was.

J. E. B.