



Remarks by

Honorary Commodore
Herbert Hoover

Key Largo Anglers Club
induction of Flag Officers
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INTRODUCTION

With this change in administration, through the tradition of annual re-appointment of the Commodore of the Club and his assistants, I seem to be the only permanent member of the Commodore family.

The former Commodores and Vice-Commodores comprise a list of distinguished Americans as well as outstanding fishermen. On this occasion your selections are no less distinguished. Commodore Benson Ford, who now retires to private life in the Club, has upheld the traditions of this institution nobly — and Mr. Jack Kimberly brings with him all of the good qualifications known to the human race.

It is my privilege to present their flags.

YOUR GREAT PRESIDENT, Clint Campbell, seemed to think this important occasion warranted a speech of introduction from me. I have a script. If I ad-lib, I may miss the terminal.

Some years ago I attended a University luncheon. The speaker began before we had anything to eat. As he ad-libbed he spoke for over an hour. When he sat down he asked me: "What are those marks you have been making on the menu?" I replied: "They are the nine terminals you missed." He ceased to speak to me.

And I give you these reassurances:

I am my own ghost.

The terminal of this speech is coming in just six minutes.

I may remind you, this sanctuary from turbulent mankind is not devoted to art, literature, or political oratory. It is a fisherman's dream. However, it has a weakness for the art of antiques; that is, by way of stuffed fishes. They are appropriate for the Club — which has a large staff to mind the weevils.

But if you are inclined toward having your first fish stuffed, I suggest you wait until you can observe the rubbish barges going to the dump at sea. You

can see them early morning at the piers. And you will find them topped with stuffed fish that the housekeeper has secretly bribed a truck driver to take away. The barge man will accommodate you for a dollar or less — and throw in for free the inevitable moths and weevils.

One man of my acquaintance saved his stuffed sailfish from his wife's zeal by digging a hole in the floor of his library — put his sailfish in it and bolted a plate glass over it. He put a lamp in the fish's eye and could wink it with a secret button. His guests expressed astonishment. With this conversational springboard, he was able to recite the history of each sailfish he had caught. His wife always remained silent.

There are a dozen justifications for fishing. Among them is its importance to the political world.

25 million persons pay for fishing licenses each year—and veterans mostly go free. No political aspirant can qualify for election unless he demonstrates he is a fisherman. But sometimes their attempts to qualify become a liability. President Coolidge early in his Administration started fishing for trout with worms. All fly fishermen in the country raised their eyebrows.

Senator Taft's manager had Bob photographed holding a big fish. But the reporters discovered the fish had been borrowed from the market. They photographed the dealer with the fish when it was returned.

However, fishing reduces the ego of candidates and even Presidents and Past-Presidents — for all men are equal before fishes.

When you get full up of telephone bells, church bells, office boys, columnists, pieces of paper and the household chores — you get that urge to go away from here to somewhere else. Going fishing is the only explanation in the world that even skeptics will accept.

The major purpose of this institution called the Key Largo Anglers Club is fishing. There are supplementary objectives:

The chance to associate with fishermen and the more usually successful fisherladies. You have the opportunity of renewal of old and long-time friendships. All fishermen and fisherladies are by nature friendly and righteous persons. No one of them ever went to jail while fishing.

Some 450 years ago Ponce de Leon was hereabouts — searching for the waters of the Fountain of Youth.

The waters of the Fountain of Youth were all about him. This Club is located on one of them.

Fishing is even more than the Fountain of Youth. As I have said before, it is a chance to wash one's soul with pure air, with the ripple of the stream and the shimmer of the sun on the blue waters.

It brings meekness and inspiration from the glory and wonder of nature, and charity towards tackle-makers. It brings mockery of profits; the quieting of hate and lift of the spirit. And it brings rejoicing that you do not have to decide a darned thing until next week.

The other day, speaking at Lake Okeechobee, I mentioned the Assyrian tablet of 2000 B.C. which says:

THE GODS DO NOT SUBTRACT
FROM THE ALLOTTED SPAN OF MEN'S LIVES
THE HOURS SPENT IN FISHING.

Herbert Hoover