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Editor's Mail Box

The Pelicans' Decline

To the Editor:

In reference to W. E. Hazeltine's letter (Sept. 4, claiming that the plight of the brown pelican has been exaggerated by environmentalists):

He stated that the first thin eggs were discovered in 1969. But previous investigations revealed that in 1962 they were 26 percent thinner than in the pre-DDT era. This year they are about 50 percent thinner.

He states that there is a "present pelican recovery" off the coast of Southern California. Fact: More than 500 breeding pelicans established 262 nests and laid approximately 750 eggs this year on Anacapa Island. Result: 57 hatched young. This is a production rate of about 0.2 young per nest. Maintaining the present population of brown pelicans requires a production of about 1.5 young per nest.

The results on the Coronado Islands (which are in Mexican waters) this year were similarly disastrous.

In 1969 there were 1272 nests with eggs on Anacapa. In just three years nesting attempts on Anacapa have declined by more than a thousand!

In the last three years the use of DDT has diminished in California . . . The result is that the DDT residue level found in Southern California has been drastically reduced . . . But this lower level is still far from acceptable as demonstrated by the failure of the brown pelican colonies in California this year. It is fortunate that so far the Mexican colonies have not suffered so grievously.

DAVID C. SMITH
Director of Research, International
Bird Research Center,
Berkeley

An Arab View

In an Aug. 27 article headlined "Liberal Italy Hit by Anti-Semitic Wave," it is stated that "anti-Israel publications, Jewish community leaders believe, are financed by the information departments of Arab embassies."

For the record it must be stated that in Arab life there has been a total absence of . . . anti-Semitism. The Arabs are among the very few people of the world who can say and offer ample evidence to prove that the Jews among them were never persecuted for their faith.

Throughout Arab history members of

the appearance of not being "productively employed." I have learned that there may be any number of reasons such as waiting for a "fire watch," waiting for someone to open a locked compartment door.

There may be temporary impediments that will cause a brief work stoppage such as flooding in a compartment, excessive burning fumes and in the case of some individuals low work motivation levels requiring almost constant and direct supervision.

Quite a few of us in the industry are vitally interested in economy, productivity, quality workmanship . . . This is a constant battle in an industry struggling for survival. The amount of gold-bricking is minimal. My personal opinion is that most of the people employed in shipbuilding are sincere, hardworking and in some cases overworked . . .

JOSEPH SCAVONE, Jr.
Delegate, Metal Trades Council
San Francisco

Mideast

Re: letter ("Israel Haters," Aug. 30) . . . Israel might not be pro-Western and certainly would not be a power were it not for American dollars and Phantoms. More important: the United States would not have to support Israel for supposed strategic reasons because it would have no enemies in the Mideast nor would there be any Russian threat if it would show more understanding of the injustice done by Israel to the Arabs.

Egypt has already accepted Israel's existence. What Egypt wants is the return of occupied territories. If only America would express moral support for this claim, it would have only friends in the Middle East. Seldom could America gain so much by doing so little.

DR. PETER B. DIRKSEN
Cairo

Dr. Dirksen is Dutch and teaches Old Testament at the Evangelical Seminary in Cairo. He has been visiting at the San Francisco Theological Seminary at San Anselmo.—Editor.

Police

It would be helpful if the "new centuries" would exercise some old-fashioned courtesy if they want the respect they deserve.

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