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EBBA'S PRESIDENT SAYS: Just about one hundred years ago, Lyman Beecher said, "No great advances have ever been made in science, politics, or religion without controversy." And for the first time, bird banding is engaged in such a controversy. The last issue of EBBA NEWS you will recall was filled with nine pages of controversy concerned with a new advance in bird-banding -- Mist Netting.

Wordwise, the pro-netters got off to a strong start and attained a five to two page advantage over the anti-netters. This bander who is always interested in fair and open discussion, hopes that the net controversy will not cool off until it has been completely discussed on the open floor of our annual meeting. At that time he as presiding officer will see that equal time is given to both factions to express their opinions, to bring forth the facts, and to introduce and vote upon resolutions which some of the membership may feel are necessary to prevent the misuse of nets.

Without abandoning his neutral position, (EBBA's President netted about 2,000 birds in 1956) this bander feels that amateur banders are almost always careful and humane bird handlers. It is possible, however, that criticism in regard to handling of netted birds, might not be misplaced if it were to be directed toward professional bird netters, working on various projects for state game agencies, and the like. Mr. Duvall, last spring, was heard to say that one netter, working on woodcock, requested and obtained 95 nets. It is only human to wonder just how this netter maintains a high standard of bird handling and how non-game birds -- woodpeckers, thrushes, etc., fare when they are taken in similar game operations. Finally, one might wonder who in these various game agencies, and research projects, decides on the qualifications, if any, for bird netting.

This criticism most assuredly is not directed toward Mr. Duvall, Seth Low, Chandler Robbins, or other Fish and Wildlife Service banders