

Conservation

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Achievement of Bird Protectionists

Uniform Protection for Birds Throughout Canada and the United States

Bird lovers throughout North America are deeply gratified over the recent conclusion of the treaty under which Canada and the United States will co-operate in extending adequate protection to insectivorous bird life. The treaty applies to useful birds of migratory habits, and includes practically all our Canadian songsters, most of which are invaluable destroyers of insect pests. An absolute close season throughout the year is imposed on migratory insectivorous birds, enumerated as follows: Bobolinks, catbirds, chickadees, cuckoos, flickers, fly-catchers, grosbeaks, humming birds, kinglets, martins, meadowlarks, nighthawks or bull bats, nut-hatches, orioles, robins, shrikes, swallows, swifts, tangers, titmice, thrushes, vireos, warblers, waxwings, whippoorwills, woodpeckers and wrens, and all other perching birds which feed entirely or chiefly on insects. Except for scientific or propagating purposes, these birds, their eggs or their nests may not be taken at any time.

Bird protectionists in general, whether actuated chiefly by sentimental or economic motives, have fought a hard battle and achieved a magnificent triumph. The greatness of their cause, from a purely material standpoint, may be appreciated when it is stated on competent authority that the annual loss in the United States on farm and forest products, chargeable to insect pests, exceeds \$500,000,000. As Canada's losses are no doubt proportionately great, it is evident that no efforts should be spared to protect birds and all other insect destroyers.

Bird protection in Canada is a matter of provincial jurisdiction, and in most cases the laws have been fairly adequate. If properly carried out, however, the provisions of the treaty, offering uniform protection of the continent, should enable North American bird life to thrive and increase as never before.

Municipal Skating Rinks

Their Establishment Justified as a Measure of Health and Public Safety

Open air possesses a fascination for the Canadian youth unsurpassed by any other attraction. One result of this yearning has been the organization of the playground movement in many of our cities and towns. Wherever established, playgrounds have met with immediate success. Regulated play inculcates lessons of discipline intermingled with pleasure, and creates a lasting impression upon the young.

In the majority of cases the playgrounds were originally established by public-spirited citizens who had the welfare of the children at heart. The success of the movement has led to its adoption by municipalities, who are now making appropriations for maintenance.

Our winter, however, militates against a long season for the playground, and in the cold weather, a substitute attraction, *viz.*, the skating rink, should be provided. Municipal outdoor skating rinks have many advantages, not the least being the counter-attraction to the pleasures of hanging on sleighs or coasting on the public streets, both dangerous practices.

Open-air rinks can be provided at very small cost. School grounds, vacant lots or other open spaces may be used. The area should be enclosed with boards eight inches wide, set vertically, and supported by wooden pegs driven into the ground on the outside. The fire department can flood the rinks and a few of the street employees can keep the ice clear of snow and preserve order.

The municipal skating rink is a wholly commendable investment of public funds; it supplies pleasure and recreation to the masses, as an offset to the provision of good roads for the owners of automobiles or other conveyances for pleasure. If, however, it serves no other purpose than taking children off the street, it well repays the expenditure as a measure of public safety.—D.

Successful Results

What Can Be Accomplished When Necessary Legislation is Provided

The extent to which preventive measures can be made effective in forest fire protection is indicated by the experience this season of the St. Maurice Forest Protective Association. This is an association of limit-holders, representing some 12,000 square miles of forest land on the St. Maurice river watershed, Quebec. In previous years, much loss has resulted from fires due to the carelessness of settlers in clearing land, and of river-drivers and others who had occasion to build camp fires in the woods. A vigorous campaign of education has almost eliminated these sources of fire damage within association territory. This result could not, however, have been accomplished in the case of settlers' fires, without a strict enforcement of the law which prohibits settlers from setting out clearing fires during the summer season, except on permit issued by a forest ranger. The enforcement of this provision, in combination with the vigorous campaign of education, has been so effective that the manager of the association, Mr. Henry Sorgius, reports that, this season, only one fire within association territory has been set by human agency, all the other fires reported having been caused by lightning. There has been no trouble with settlers, and it is reported that they are very generally in favour of the permit system.

In view of this admirable record in an important section of Quebec, it is evident that the province of Ontario must consider very seriously the adoption of the permit system, if a repetition of the clay belt disaster of 1916 is to be avoided, and if prospective settlers are to be assured that life and property will be sufficiently safeguarded to justify them in making their homes in the north country.—C. L.

School Teachers' Influence

Foundation for Many Needed Improvements May be Laid in Schools

To the rising generation must we look for many changes and improvements in our municipal conditions.

The children of the present, under the influence of a broad-minded teacher, will absorb lessons which will later be an enormous influence for good. A recognition of this fact, and of the great dependence placed upon them should be in the mind of everyone entrusted with the upbringing of our youth. The extent to which this power to influence children for good is recognized may be gleaned from the number of appeals made to the school teachers for assistance. Every interest working for the betterment of Canada and Canadians lays stress upon the necessity of securing the recognition and support of the children.

To this already long list has been added a call for the influence of school teachers in the keeping of streets free from litter. To a large extent the children are responsible for this. Waste paper, chewing gum and candy wrappers are thrown on streets and sidewalks regardless of the untidiness they cause. This litter is carried by the wind, and, blowing about the streets, frightens horses, causing many runaways and sometimes serious accidents. Waste paper also collects in sheltered places, falls through grates into basement window openings, or accumulates against wooden buildings or fences; a lighted match or a cigar or cigarette stub carelessly thrown aside may fall upon this accumulation of litter and cause a fire. All fires are the same size at the start and it is the apparently small and harmless fire which sometimes causes the greatest loss, both of property and lives.

The school teachers have it in their power to inculcate in their pupils a spirit of pride in the appearance of the streets, and great benefits will accrue from this effort on their part.—D.