

CORRESPONDENCE.

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The Ontario Game Laws.

Editor of Rod and Gun:

Sir,—I, Alice,¹ in the August issue of your sporting journal that you would like sportsmen's opinions of the present game laws of Ontario. This led me to believe that I am not alone in thinking that it is time we had a change.

The present Ontario game law regarding big game is the most unreasonable on record, and that is saying quite a lot, but I will give your readers my reasons for making this statement. At present we are allowed only fifteen days on red deer (open season) and our bag is limited to two deer. This simply means that we must all go in to the woods together, after our deer, amidst a hail of bullets, with big fools and little ones shooting at every sound that is heard, consequently any man that values his life will not go a second time. Now, if the game of Ontario is so scarce that we should only be allowed fifteen days of open season surely we should not be allowed to shoot does and fawns, a thing no real sportsman enjoys doing anyway. This is a mistake which can and should be corrected.

As to hunting red deer of Ontario it can't be compared with that of hunting the great monarch of the woods, the moose, and here we have been with our hands tied fast for the last ten years or so, and deprived of this great sport, which once experienced will never be forgotten. And still the moose are no more plentiful than they were ten years ago. Surely we have been experimenting long enough in this respect. The moose is game almost unknown to the majority of the sportsmen of Ontario, yet there is no doubt on earth but that there are more moose in the Province of Ontario than there are common red deer. This statement may be doubted by some who have hunted in the Muskoka district, but they must consider that that hunting ground is only a handful of earth compared with the great moose-land to the north. Clearly, the man who proposed prohibiting the shooting of moose is perfectly ignorant of the fact that moose multiply as fast if not faster than the red deer. In my experience I have found two calves with a cow moose more often than two fawns with a doe.

Now, Brother Sportsmen, you who are interested in the matter, I would like you to place yourselves with me on the north shore of Lake Superior, and look east as far as the Mattawa, and west as far as the Lake of the Woods, and consider that this country is from eight hundred to a thousand miles long, and about four hundred miles in width, at least 300,000 miles of moose country, and a perfect sportsman's paradise, lying idle. Deer are not plentiful

in this country on account of the wolves, but a man must go and see for himself before he really will believe the number of moose that there are there. Why is it the moose have not increased during the last ten years? It is not because they have been killed by sportsmen, but because the settlers and trappers that are dotted over that country are obliged to live, and they simply do as you or I would do if we were in the same position. They shoot five moose for their hides, etc., and get for them what they would realize for one, providing the sportsmen were allowed to go in there and employ them as guides. One trip to those lumber camps will convince a man of what becomes of the moose. You see them eat moose meat in the name of beef, and around the fireplace in the evening hang a waggon load of moose moccasins. This may look unreasonable to sportsmen, but it is true, for moose are simply bow-and-arrow game to these men, especially when there is four foot of snow and a nice crust, or in the summer months when they can paddle noiselessly down the river and come up within ten feet of him around the curve of the river and see him busily engaged splashing himself to keep the flies off, or eating the lily pads. One of these men during the winter does not consider that he has made wages unless he has killed from twenty to thirty moose, and so it will continue so long as this country is kept, by the laws, as they are now. What I would propose is, at least, a month of open season, say the month of November, on all kinds of deer, and that no deer be allowed to be killed unless it has horns over four inches long. The number should be limited to two, of any kind of deer. If one sees fit to shoot and kill two moose or two deer, or if he sees fit to shoot one moose and one deer, let him do so, and as long as the number is limited, let the sportsman shoot them where he sees fit. Don't say that because he is old and cannot tramp the woods as we do that he shall not sit in a canoe and take a crack at an old buck or bull as he comes to drink. Because you and I would not enjoy such a thing, that is no reason why we should deprive those who do enjoy it. They have as much right to look for their two bucks as we have. And again you compel a sportsman to look for a deer's horns before he shoots. This will have a great tendency to keep him from shooting a companion. There would be no excuse left for this mistake, and a man guilty of it should be convicted by any jury of manslaughter. If one of my party, under such a law, shot a doe or a cow, I would send him down as quick as any one, if for nothing more than protection to our party, for he would have no excuse whatever to offer, and if he shot a deer before he saw what it was he would be as apt to shoot a man.

As to the non-residence license, I have nothing particular against that, although I am not in favor of it, for this reason:—As it is now, now and then the Government receive a \$25 license fee, when the guides in the north, those who should have it and are in need of it, would receive a hundred dollars. Does it not look reasonable that this would encourage these people to protect the game, for as soon as sportsmen realize the fact that they can get moose every time they come to Ontario, they will only kill a few moose compared with what is killed now, and will leave hundreds and thousands of dollars in the country, and the settlers will thus realize the real value of this noble game and be anxious to protect them.

Why should Ontario be behind the State of Maine in this respect? The sportsmen left over \$300,000, distributed amongst the guides, etc., in Maine in the year 1899, and certainly the game of Maine are not to be compared with the game of Ontario. Again, as soon as the settlers realize the value of this game to them they will be more anxious to destroy the wolves, and then red deer will become as plentiful north of the C. P. R. as they are south of it at present.

Now, Brother Sportsmen, it seems to me that I have often read articles in sporting papers, that were written because the writer had an axe to grind in some way or shape, but such is not the case this time with me, for I am under no obligation to any man. I can build my own canoe and put my little 7 x 9 tent, stove, etc., in, and paddle my way up and down river and across lakes, pitch my tent in suitable ground, and when I return I can sell my moose head, if I see fit, for enough to buy my license, and buy others for three or four seasons. Fortunately I am not compelled to do so, but I would like to see the day when I can shoot a moose in Ontario, and two weeks is not long enough open season for it. A man can't afford to hunt moose in Ontario if he is only allowed to go every third year, as it takes one year to locate the hunting ground, and after a wait of three years he would probably have to go and hunt another one or depend entirely upon the guides.

"GORILLA CHIEF."

Editor Rod and Gun:

Sir,—My chief complaint against the game laws is the Ontario moose season, Nov. 1 to 15, once every three years. I obey the law, consequently my moose shoots are like angels' visits, few and far between. Others I know of shoot as they please, have done so last and other years, and will again. Let us have some harmonizing of laws that will give a decent season every year. There will be just as many moose left.

MATTAWA.