

for the object of inducing many to join; sometimes the large membership does not materialize and the result is disastrous. Those induced to join such organizations are usually willing to make their largest payment at the time they become members, therefore, the membership fee should be larger than the annual dues; it is easy to reduce the fees later on if desirable, but it is impracticable to increase them.

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It is not often that a railway corporation interferes with the operation of the game protection acts, but such a case occurred in Manitoba a short time since where there was a short and sanguinary tussle between the iron horse and a bull moose, and although there was provocation to the former the result was that Manitoba is said to possess one less forest king.

Despatches from Brandon, Man., of December 26th, state "that the Vancouver westbound express train was travelling at a slow rate of speed, and had just reached the Brandon mile board when the engineer saw a giant bull moose standing on the track. He sounded the whistle and slowed up his train, but the king of the forest refused to move. He was not to be bluffed by any red eyed animals with no more horns than a locomotive.

"He was bent on fight, and tossing his antlers in the most defiant manner, dashed toward the engine. The engineer saw him coming and opened up the throttle and went at him. It was only a fight of a minute. The bull's horns became wedged in the pilot, and he bellowed and kicked, but to no avail. The train pulled up, and the remains were cleared away.

"Conductor Fayhe brought a hind quarter of the carcass into the city, and his friends are now enjoying moose meat."

The despatches are lacking in at least three respects, viz., first, heretofore moose have been reported in good quantity in Manitoba only in districts considerably north and east of Brandon and their presence in the wheat belt has hitherto been unsuspected. Are there any more near Brandon? Second, if a bull moose had strayed to the farming country from the moose lands of Manitoba there is no explanation of the extraordinary occurrence of finding him so close to the city, and third, we are left in doubt as to whether the game authorities will arrest the locomotive, or the engine driver or the railway, and if the latter might not the railway officers reasonably object to the game commissioners allowing their live stock to wander onto the right of way and claim that the game commissioners were negligent and therefore the railway is not to blame?

Reports are being brought down from the upper Stewart country giving details of indiscriminate slaughter, a game which should be given attention by the Dominion authorities. The country adjacent to the upper branches of the Stewart River is a natural game preserve. Moose and caribou are found there in such abundance that hunters are reported to have killed upward of fifty of these noble animals in a single day. Returned prospectors state that game is being slaughtered merely for the fun of the thing, and scores of carcasses which cannot be used or carried away are left in the spot where they were killed. It is certainly a shame that such a condition of affairs exists. The big game of the country is one of its most attractive features. Moose and caribou are not only important as furnishing a large portion of our meat supply, but they are the natural heritages of the legitimate prospector, and should be protected for his benefit. We submit to the authorities that some means should be taken to restrain men who insist upon killing off our big game for the mere sake of killing. There is no excuse for such barbarity.—Exchange.

REGARDING WOODCOCK.

By Chas. A. Bramble

At the recent meeting of the game laws committee of the N.A.F. & G.P.A., one of the birds which came in for a full share of discussion was the woodcock (*Philohela minor*). Now the woodcock has always been a favorite of mine. I have studied its habits, learned what I could of its ways, and hence what was said at that meeting—for I was present—claimed my undivided attention.

Many of the statements did not tally with my own experience. Some of them were, I feel sure, incorrect, but this need not surprise us, because the woodcock is the most mysterious of birds, and unless a man is able and willing to devote much of his time to studying the species, he is likely to make many errors concerning it.

To begin at the beginning: Our bird is not the European woodcock of song and story, though I am afraid a good many writers on this side of the Atlantic have overlooked this, when they cribbed material from English works and gave the same, unblushingly, as their own observations. *Scolopax rusticola*, the European woodcock, is a much heavier bird than *P. minor*, a perfect prince of the feathered race, in its delicious russet dress, but our own little dun-breasted bird is a close second, and is, to my mind, the most attractive winged game we have. The witchery of a day after woodcock, in the dreamy fall, is acknowledged by all old sportsmen. The European species breeds in Scandinavia, Lapland, Northern Russia and sub-Arctic Siberia, nesting in higher latitudes than our bird, which goes nowhere north of the fiftieth parallel. *Scolopax* does not reach the countries where sportsmen are awaiting it until mid-October at the earliest, and more often not until November. The British Isles, and especially the north and west coasts of Ireland, are noted for woodcock, and old country sportsmen are fortunate in having the birds with them during the five best months of the year, for sport.

Our conditions are not the same. Here in Canada (as well as in northern Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine) we furnish the breeding grounds for *P. minor*, just as the northern European and Asiatic countries do for *Scolopax rusticola*. Very early in the spring, sometimes before March is out, the mated woodcock are back from their winter in the Southern States. So soon as there is bare ground the rough nest is made, and three, four, or five eggs laid—usually four. After three weeks close attention by the parents the chicks appear, and no doubt grow fast. I have often seen the cock bird performing the most extraordinary gyrations in the air, during the lingering twilight of the north in May. At such times they utter sounds and cries, unknown at other seasons; they also lose much of their timidity, for I have known them to alight within 20 feet of where I was sitting in the open.

Once upon a time I lived in central New Brunswick, amid coverts difficult to surpass as a breeding ground. There was always a young dog or two to break, and so I was out day after day tramping the alder swales, giving the puppies the necessary work and training. I found the birds in fair numbers, (though these numbers fluctuated considerably with the seasons) and by August the young could fly very well, but were still pretty callow and soft. About Aug. 10 they were fit to shoot, and for a fortnight or so a man willing to perspire in their pursuit could make the heaviest bags of the year. After that they disappeared, and until the fag end of September it was no earthly use wasting a thought on woodcock. Now, where did they go? I know this is a moot point. Having read almost