

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

WANTED—A GUN LICENSE

To the Field Sports Editor, Sunday Colonist.

Sir—I should imagine that most sportsmen who have considered the matter will agree that, unless something is done to preserve the feathered game of Vancouver Island, a few more years will witness its practical extermination. Gone, and I am much afraid, never to return, are those days of four or five years ago that we have jotted down in the calendar of our memory when birds were plentiful and any afternoon a reasonably good bag could be obtained without traveling far from the outskirts of the city. It is not difficult to find the cause of the present scarcity of game; let us—

if not too late—also try to find a remedy. The existing laws are, in the main, good enough; the difficulty is, how to enforce them. The provincial game warden with the limited force at his disposal is naturally unable to police the whole of this great province, and it appears almost too much to expect that the government should find the money necessary to do so. But by paying a nominal fee, the sportsmen themselves could create a fund which would go a long way towards supplying the necessary protection.

It may be argued that as shooting has always been free in this province, it would be an injustice to the poor man to compel him to pay for his one or two days' sport; but, as a matter of fact, there are few, if any, poor men in this province in the present year of grace and good wages. The government does not contribute towards football, golf or tennis, and neither these nor any popular form of sport languishes in consequence. Why, then, should not the people who enjoy a day or a week in the woods with dog and gun pay for their pleasure?

Therefore I would advocate a gun license; and I trust, sir, that your efforts in this direction will meet with the success which they deserve.

A. S. BARTON.

Victoria, Feb. 2, 1910.

Sir—I read with pleasure in last Sunday's Colonist your article, "Wanted—A Gun License," and I can truly hope that some of our M. P.'s read it also. Very badly, indeed, is a gun license needed, and I am glad to say that at last some of our legislators are beginning to understand that it is the laborer, the clerk in the store, and others also who are clamoring for it—people who only can get a day off now and then from their work for a hunt after grouse, duck, pheasant or other game.

This idea of a gun license is no new thing in British Columbia. For the last six or seven years the government has been petitioned by deputations from both the Island and Mainland to put on a gun license, but so far to no purpose.

In the United States, most of the states have their resident gun license. A sum of over \$200,000 was collected last year in California by means of a one dollar gun license, and the money spent in protecting game and in importing game where needed.

A license of two dollars and a half in British Columbia would work no hardship on any man, and if the total amount collected were spent in properly protecting our game, that same man, instead of coming home without a single bird, as many a good hunter did on the 1st of October last, would have something to show, instead of uselessly spending his money in railway fare and hotel bill.

Wherever a gun license has been tried in the States it has been an unequal success. It is found that a person who pays for his right to shoot game, becomes a sort of game warden himself in that he takes care that anyone with whom he comes in contact out on the hills also pays for the privilege, and he sees as far as he is able that no one shoots the game out of season, which he pays for to shoot in season.

I trust, sir, that your efforts in the direction of securing a gun license for the province will be successful. Ninety-nine men out of a hundred who shoot are with you, and the hundredth is probably one of those who "wants his cake and wishes to eat it also." One has only to travel in an E. & N. smoker on any holiday during the shooting season to listen to the conversation of the sportsmen collected there, to learn that they would all hold up their hands for a gun license.

J. MUSGRAVE.

Sir—I heartily endorse the position taken by you in your article in last Sunday's Colonist regarding the need of a gun license.

I have resided in the interior of this province and on the coast for a number of years, and my experience has led me to the conclusion that, unless a law requiring a gun license is passed, the practical extermination of our wild game is only a matter of a few years.

PHILIP OLDHAM.

To the Field Sports Editor, Sunday Colonist.

Sir—I noticed in your last Sunday morning supplement an article advocating a gun license, and at the same time you ask for expressions of opinion from other members of the brotherhood of hunters.

Speaking for myself, I am most certainly in favor of a gun tax to be imposed on all people carrying a gun, and at the same time making it compulsory to produce receipt for same on demand from any authorized person.

Most men who have the interests of the majority at heart will support this very necessary legislation. It will be a safeguard to our lives and a check on the crowd of hunters who don't care how soon the game is exterminated.

It will also stop the murder of divers and gulls which goes on Sunday after Sunday in our midst. The amount of the tax should not be less than \$2.50 per annum, and the revenue derived from this source would be of a substantial size, and should be devoted to bettering the protection of our feathered game on this Island.

It is now up to all of us to use what influence we have to get this tax imposed at once, and I hope that your columns will show from the numbers of letters received that the interest is keen.

J. H. GILLESPIE.

Sir—You are to be congratulated upon your timely article in last Sunday's Colonist, advocating the imposition of a gun license for all who possess firearms. The necessity of such legislation has been evident for several years past, in the interests of the protection of our furred and feathered game. It is not necessary here to dwell at length upon the wasteful destruction of both bird and beast which has grown steadily worse in the past five or six years, with the increase of population, until whole districts which once abounded in game of every description are now completely shot out.

To a very large number of men, one of the principal attractions of rural life in Canada is the shooting. A good and carefully protected stock of game is thus a most valuable asset in the list of our resources, and forms a strong and influential factor in settling our rural districts—an indispensable part of the building of a nation. Of the power of this influence I witnessed a remarkable example three weeks ago.

A well known local professional man had in hand for a client the sale of a piece of land about nine miles from Victoria. An old friend of his, a Montreal man of wealth and position, came out here on a visit, and desired to purchase a country residence within a moderate distance of Victoria. The local man took him out to see this place. The Montreal man was pleased with it, but the price, though not high, would not be called a low one, and the Eastern gentleman, who was no longer in his first youth, and had learned to look twice at a dollar before letting go of it, could not make up his mind. He "hummed" and "hewed," and meanwhile the two of them walked about over the property.

Suddenly a fine covey of quail rose out of the scrub almost at their feet, and the Montreal man jumped.

"Do you mean to say you have quail here?" he asked.

The local man, who does not shoot, and to whom a game-bird was of no more interest than a blue-jay, answered carelessly enough that there were plenty of quail, grouse and pheasant around. The Montreal man said nothing, but was wrapped in thought.

They climbed into their rig to return to town, and on the way to the gate of the property, put up two fine cock pheasants. The man from Montreal turned to his friend:

"I'll take that property," he said. "Have the papers made out at once."

Twenty-four hours later the sale was completed, and I am betraying no confidence when I say that the price paid was a record one for the locality.

Now, I am in a position to vouch for the exact truth of this occurrence, and it is, I consider, a most striking instance of the valuable asset which we have in our game.

The revenue from a gun license would enable the staff of game wardens to be largely increased. The present men do their duty well, but their numbers are too small to be of much use. One man cannot catch another in the bush lands of British Columbia.

Then, if a gun license act is passed, it must be kept in mind that the law has got to be enforced. This brings us to the consideration of the small boy and the .22 rifle. There is, and has been for years, a law on the statute book to the effect that no person under the age of 16 shall be allowed to carry or use firearms unless accompanied by a grown-up person. It is a good law, but how many convictions have there been under it? Yet the woods are full at this season of the year with children of what is known as a tender age—each child carrying a firearm of some description, from a .22 rifle up to a 12-bore shotgun or a .303 Savage—which last weapon a friend of mine met a twelve-year-old boy shooting with a few weeks ago not two miles outside the city limits.

I would not prevent boys from shooting by any means. I believe that every boy ought to be taught to use a rifle and shotgun as soon as he is twelve years old. But, until he is sixteen or eighteen years old, he should never be allowed out with a firearm unless accompanied by a grown-up person. This would also provide grand and health-giving exercise for the fathers of several families which I could name.

Finally, as an assistance to the game wardens and to enforce the working of a gun license act, if such legislation can be passed, permission should be given to every farmer of good standing and repute in the country districts to require every person he may meet out shooting to show his gun license. This law exists in the Old Country, and has always worked well.

In regard to the tax itself, about \$2.50 per annum should be a suitable figure for the present. As to its being a hardship, that is nonsense, and no true sportsman will advance such a ridiculous argument. I am a poor man myself, and most of my friends are away down below the automobile and champagne class, but there is not one of us who does not think that \$2.50 or even \$5 a year is a cheap price

to pay for the proper protection of the finest sport in the world.

I wish you luck in your praiseworthy agitation.

G. SHELDON-WILLIAMS.

To the Field Sports Editor, Sunday Colonist.

Sir—I read with interest your article on gun licenses in last Sunday's Colonist, and cheerfully contribute my ideas upon the subject. I think that if, by persistently "keeping at it," you bring the authorities to see how great an asset our game birds are to our province; how surely we will lose this asset within a measurable period if rational protection be not afforded to our game birds; you will have earned the gratitude of all who go afield. Speaking of Vancouver Island and of the adjoining islands of the Gulf, I think the imposition of a moderate gun license would provide an annual working fund of \$100,000. With such a sum an intelligent policing of the game districts could be arranged for, and those who do not now obey the act could be made to do so. Alteration of the game laws is not needed so much as the enforcement of them, and if a fund is required by the authorities for such enforcement, it is ready to their hands by the establishment of a gun license. It would, I think, be willingly paid by the majority of sportsmen.

ERNEST BRAMMER.

CAPERCAILLIE AND BLACKGAME IN THEIR NATIVE HAUNTS

(From an Article by "Sleipner" in The Field.)

Although capercaille are fairly plentiful, they are not so readily bagged. To the novice it may seem strange that there should be any difficulty in shooting so large a bird; the idea of missing one seems absurd. The fact is, however, that in shooting over dogs the capercaille is very difficult to hit, for it nearly always lies in tolerably close fir or birch wood, and has a wonderful knack of securing a tree to mask its line of flight. It is safe to say that one rarely gets more than a fleeting glance at one, and very quick shooting is necessary to stop the older individuals. Now and again young capercaille are found in more open ground, and are easily bagged; but as a rule they lie in thick cover, sitting splendidly to the dog, but giving the poorest of chances as they rise, or rather "slink" out, between the fir trees.

The ideal dog for use with these birds is one that will seek wide, report a find, and, returning with the gun to the "point," encircles the same, thus stopping running, and then at a sign "runs in" and flushes the bird. This prevents the latter from using its usual tactics, and a fair shot may be obtained.

The greyhen and brood also lie often enough in open ground and afford easy shooting. The old hen is generally left off, but the old blackcock is as expert as the capercaille at selecting thick cover to rise from, and it requires both skill and luck to get a shot at either. With a couple of good hounds the shooting of hares and roedeer is a comparatively easy matter, always supposing that one is addicted to early rising and a good walker.

In winter excellent sport is obtained with the rifle, when capercaille and blackcock "sit up" in the fir tops, and it is astonishing how little attention they pay to the report of a rifle as long as one is well concealed. The male birds may be shot until February 15. The close time for roedeer begins January 1, but from the end of October till then very fair stalking may be done, as the tracks in the snow assist in locating the game. Winter is really the best time for easily procuring capercaille, blackcock, and roedeer, and any medium-bore rifle carrying well up to 100 yards is suitable for the purpose.

A double-barrelled shotgun, with rifle barrel underneath, known as the "drilling," is a favorite weapon nowadays on the Continent, and is well adapted for the various chances of shooting that may occur. For instance, in dull, snowy weather the blackcock settle in the snow and seem loth to leave their holes, thus affording excellent chances as they rise to the shotgun, and on bright, cold days they "sit up," as before mentioned, in packs of fifty to sixty birds, when the rifled barrel comes into play.

When the ground is frozen and the snow not too deep walking is facilitated; if, however, the snow is deep ordinary locomotion becomes rather a toil, and patrons of the northern games have a chance to indulge in ski-running—at any rate when the snow has a frozen surface.

One great charm of shooting here in winter is that new fallen snow is soon imprinted with a variety of game tracks, and affords not only a means of discovering their whereabouts, but also of studying the movements of wild game in their natural haunts.

TROUT CULTURE IN THE TRANSVAAL

The report of the Transvaal Trout Acclimatization Society on the work of the year 1908 mentions the fact that owing to the decision of the government to erect a large dam at Potchefstroom, which will flood the site of the old hatchery which has done such good service, it will be necessary to select a new site.

This has been chosen quite close to the old one. With regard to the year's work, it is recorded with regret that the importation of 40,000 brown trout ova from the Solway fisheries was a failure. Good work was done, however, as is evident from the report of Mr. C. Harvey, who manages the hatchery. Eighty-two female trout were spawned, yielding over 64,000 ova, of which about 54,000 were

successfully impregnated. Of these 10,000 were sent to Swaziland, 1,000 to Lydenburg. Of the rest about 40,000 reached the alevin stage and 30,000 became fry. Some mortality occurred among them then owing to overcrowding, this being due to the pending removal of the hatchery and the impracticability of making new ponds in the circumstances. Good results were obtained with a consignment of 5,000 brown trout ova from the Cape government hatchery at Jonker's Hoek, which hatched out very successfully in July. In January, at the time of writing the report, a good number of the little fish were over 4in. long. Mr. Harvey emphasizes the need for protecting fry in a limited area from such enemies as waterfowl, snakes, water-toads, etc. This, he says, can be done "by forming nursery pools of oblong boxes or shallow cement ponds, over which lids of perforated zinc should be placed."

After a list of the distributions of fish, it is stated that in January there were about 70,000 yearlings in stock. It is noted that the society's work in acclimatizing carp has been very successful. It introduced carp into the Kleinfontein Homestead Dam in 1904, and in 1908 a number of small ones were taken out to stock other waters. The fish in the dam are becoming so numerous that Mr. Harvey considers it desirable to remove as many as possible this year, for fear they should deteriorate. He comments on the fact that "the whole population of the lake has sprung from an original stock of eighteen fish about 4in. long." The fish are evidently popular, as "there are many applications for carp from farmers all over the country."

With regard to the trout liberated earlier, it is stated that fish have thrived and reproduced in the Broederstroom and various waters in the Carolina district. A list of waters which have yielded fish to anglers is given, the Moori being, of course, the most prominent. It is satisfactory to feel that "there is not much doubt now that before long trout will be firmly established in the different waters of this colony, and good trout fishing readily obtainable, and it will not be necessary for sportsmen to journey to Cape Colony and Natal to indulge in this favorite pastime."

JUST IN TIME

The water was not reached till 1 p. m., and at this time of year a late hour at which to begin a day's dry fly fishing. But the angler had no choice in the matter, and he hurried over the last hundred yards of meadow murmuring a devout hope that the fly might not be all over, that, even should Providence not vouchsafe that rare blessing, an afternoon rise, there might still be a few stragglers moving here and there; to give him something to do while waiting for the evening rise. It was a hot day and a sultry, holding promise of thunder somewhere if not in the valley of the Itchen, so he did not dare to hope for much, and was duly grateful when the ring of a rising trout was the very first thing visible as his eyes came into line with the water. Even more grateful was he when at the first cast the fish took the ginger quill with confidence; and after a brisk little fight was in the net, a shapely pouncer. A fish in five minutes—an excellent beginning.

In five minutes more a second was in the net, but it was a hair's breadth under twelve inches, so back it went none the worse. Ten minutes later a third was hooked on a sharp shallow thirty yards below a hatch; and it dashed away up stream like a mad thing, tearing line off the reel and getting right into the rough water. This must surely be a big one. But no, the effort could not be sustained, and it came down stream again and ultimately into the net, two ounces heavier than the first. They made a pretty brace as they lay on the bed of dried rushes in the creel. After this no more rising fish could be found for some time, until the bend below the big pool was reached. Here a trout was coming up quietly under the far bank. It rose at the ginger quill promptly but missed, rose again after a rest and was missed again. And then, strange to relate, it rose a third time at the same fly and took it. It is not so strange to relate that a too sudden strike left the fly in its mouth. Then came troubles, two good trout pricked and lost, and a third put down after ten minutes of vain effort to get a fly into it, the wind being dead down stream and the fish in an awkward corner.

Then came the remarkable fish in the sidestream, as restless a wanderer as could ever be met with. First it rose twenty yards up from the mouth of the stream, next fifty yards, next seventy, next a hundred, and so on, the angler pursuing it as quickly as creeping on hands and knees would allow. At last he withdrew from the bank and hurried up the meadow away from the water, approaching again at the spot where the trout ought now to be. By this time it seemed to have stopped rising, and he was just about to give it up when suddenly it came into view swimming slowly up stream. The fly fell promptly before it, was taken at once, and soon the creel contained a third inhabitant of 1lb. 4oz.

Another wanderer higher up was not so complaisant. Despite a cautious approach it caught sight of rod or angler or both, and was off like a torpedo, making great waves in the small stream. Do trout become liable to panic or that sort everywhere at a given moment? It is a curious fact that for the rest of the afternoon every fish approached fled in a like manner, and the basket grew no heavier. There was no evening rise at all, so the angler had to be content with his brace and a half caught in little more than an hour. Evidently he arrived only just in time.



The Sportsman's Calendar

FEBRUARY

Sports for the Month—For the angler: Grilse and Spring Salmon. For the shooter: Ducks and Geese.
In Season—Ducks, geese, brant, snipe; grilse, salmon, steelheads in tidal water.
February 28 the last day of the season for shooting ducks or snipe; also the last day on which it is lawful to sell wild geese.

PANTHER SHOT IN A BAZAAR

The following is a brief account of an exciting half hour which I experienced with a panther which had strayed into the bazaar. I was staying at N—pur at the time with the Deputy Commissioner, having been shooting in his district. Several reports had been brought in of a panther having been seen in the bazaar at night, but none of us had paid much attention to them. A day or two later, while having early morning tea with J. on the verandah, a native rushed up to say that the panther was locked up in a house in the bazaar. He also told us that the doctor and D. S. P., whom I will call C., had been informed of the fact.

We hurriedly dressed, and, taking our guns, hastened to where the panther was reported to be locked in. On the way we learned that the doctor and C. were ahead of us, so we quickened our pace, for we did not wish to miss any of the fun. We arrived to find a large crowd assembled in the main thoroughfare, and down a side lane. As we pushed our way down the narrow lane the crowd suddenly turned and rushed past us with loud cries, nearly knocking us down. I personally do not know what I should have done if the panther had appeared; it would have been impossible to have shot without the danger of killing someone. Luckily it proved to be a false alarm, and we soon reached the house where the panther had been shut in. We found the doctor and C. sitting on the roof watching two holes they had made by pulling off a few tiles.

All possible exits except these had been closed. J. and I quickly climbed up, and, making two peep-holes for ourselves, waited for the panther to make the first overtures. The roof was in a very ramshackle state, and it was surprising that nobody fell through. Suddenly growls were heard inside, and we all tried to catch a glimpse of the animal; J. put his head too close to the opening he had made, and with a savage growl the panther sprang up and, thrusting a paw through, tore his face. Luckily the wound was but slight, though he might have been badly injured.

I had no time for a shot, and the panther again retired. In order to move the beast we all fired a round through our peep-holes. After a short pause the animal sprang at the opening where I was stationed. I allowed it to get partly out, and then shot it dead with a ball from my 12-bore gun.

To make certain it was dead the doctor also fired into it with his revolver as it lay on the floor of the hut where it had fallen. When we pulled the body out it proved to be a small female panther, 5ft. from tip to tip, very thin. It was probably starving, which accounted for its presence in the bazaar. A large crowd carried it back in triumph to the bungalow, where the skin was quickly removed and pegged out to dry. We then escorted J. to the hospital, where his wound was dressed and a couple of stitches put in, and we left him with congratulations that the matter was not more serious.—H. B.

A man was brought up on a charge of beating his wife and biting off a portion of her ear. However, the woman, good-natured soul, was anxious to screen her husband, and, if possible, obtain his acquittal, as appears from her evidence.

Magistrate—"Your husband has been treating you very badly, eh?"

Witness—"Oh, no, your worship!"

Magistrate—"No? Why, did he not bite off a piece of your ear?"

Witness—"No, your worship; I did it myself!"

At the Lambs' Club a group of actors were laughing heartily over a story just told them by Willie Collier, when someone, in a spirit of banter, asked: "Willie, isn't that one of Lackaye's stories?" "Not yet," answered Willie.

N LACE MAKER
LACE

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E. DIESPECKER

than Fiction

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is said to be free from
and all vulgarity, and
is simply upon its witty
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