

# Field Sports at Home and Abroad

## LOCAL NOTES

(Richard L. Pocock.)

I would like humbly to suggest to those pessimistic gentlemen, who so frequently voice the opinion that the country is shot out, that the time to judge of the stock of game in the country is not after the shooting season has opened and the woods are full of guns and dogs and the air is full of small shot and large, after the .22 has got in a lot of its deadly work, and the birds have retreated in alarm to the natural protection afforded by the timber, but right now when the birds are mating and the woods are full of the music of their mating calls and challenges. Judging from the amount of game which can be seen from the E. & N. train between Shawinigan and Victoria any fine evening now, there would seem to be plenty of breeding stock left from last season.

Between the Summit and Goldstream the other evening I counted over a dozen blue grouse which flew up from the track in front of the engine, not to mention others which were spotted on rocks and logs surprised in the antics of courtship. On the same evening I saw two deer from the train, an unusual experience to be sure, though none yet has suggested that deer are scarce.

By the way, it has been suggested before, but a good suggestion if often repeated sometimes gets attention, that it would be an excellent thing to make a game sanctuary especially for the benefit of blue grouse of the stretch of the country between the Summit and Goldstream, bounded by the E. & N. track and the shore of Saanich Arm. This has always been a great breeding ground for blues, and would without doubt, if this sanctuary were set apart for them and properly watched, prove a big benefit in helping to keep up a good stock in the surrounding country. The Vancouver Island Development boosters might well pay a little attention to this suggestion and throw their influence in the scale to help put it into effect, as the sight of lots of game would add to the already much-lauded and not over lauded attractions of the Mill Bay road.

The first few weeks of the fishing season have produced the usual crop of fishermen's stories of success and failure and the reasons therefor. There have been some good baskets made in the usual resorts of Victoria anglers made in the fly fishermen and also with bait. In the Cowichan river, as usual, the fly fishermen have "put it all over" the bait fishermen though in other waters the March Brown dressed "to wriggle" has been the favorite aid to filling the basket.

Praise be to the powers, it is now illegal to use an automatic shotgun. There is no argument in its favor which will bear the criticism of unselfish sportsmen.

## SIMON FRASER AND THE GAME ACT

The duty of a game warden is a thankless one, and like all other kinds of work, that of watching for the poacher must at times be irksome and monotonous. If the results of good work are not at first sight apparent, criticism is ready and easy. Preventive work is not spectacular. Occasionally, however, the game warden's disagreeable task of arresting and prosecuting the misguided gun-enthusiast is enlivened by a touch of romance. The other day the Vancouver warden had an extremely interesting experience which he related to me as follows:

About March 10th I received a complaint about illegal shooting in the vicinity of Point Grey, so the following Sunday I went out there to see what was going on. I walked out by the way of the beach and as I neared the extreme point I certainly did hear some shooting; it sounded more like Paardeberg on a busy day than Point Grey during the closed season on a Sunday. I scooped along the beach as fast as I could go to get around the point and see what was doing; when I did get around, lo and behold, about 50 yards from the shore I found six or seven canoes with two Indians in each, shooting duck for dear life, the ducks were flying close into the shore and as they kept coming round the point the shooters in the canoes had a great opportunity of passing them and this they certainly did. Mr. while I watched from the shore I must have seen fully 150 ducks shot, but having no boat I could do little else but stand and watch. Well this kept up for a considerable time until at last one canoe started down the shore towards the reserve, which is at the mouth of the north arm of the Fraser river and about 4 1/2 miles from the point (this reserve is known as the Musk-rum reservation) and I believe is a very old one. I started off to follow this canoe, and after a long journey over the rocks, I finally caught Mr. Indian just as he was coming ashore with his ducks, he had about 60 or 70 in the canoe, but they were mostly scoter or what is more commonly called Siwash ducks.

I asked him what he thought he was up to, shooting ducks after the season had closed and he politely informed me that the game laws did not apply to Musk-rum Indians and that they could shoot and fish whenever they like. I asked his name, which he appeared to have forgotten, so I took him up to the chief, who is called Johnny, and after much talk on

all sides, it ended in the Indian (named Johnny Point) being arrested. The case came up at Eburne before Capt. Stewart, J. P., on March 16. Mr. Williams and myself went down and after waiting some little time the defendant turned up with the Indian agent, Chief Johnny, and a whole bunch of Indians from the Reserve. The chief was in his Sunday attire and carried a large staff about 9 feet in length and all covered in cheese cloth. Well, in due course the case started up and the agent on behalf of the Indians pleaded "not guilty," as he said these Indians apparently had always had certain privileges in the matter of fishing and hunting, but Mr. Williams pointed out to him that no such thing could be as the game act applied to all. The chief then got up and through the aid of an interpreter told the court that he wished to tell us about the staff that he had with him. He was told to go ahead, so he very carefully unfolded all the cheese cloth and held before him a staff about eight or nine feet long and on the top was a big silver globe with figures engraved on it and surmounted by a crown. This staff he told the court was many years ago given to him by the great Queen Victoria, when he was made chief of his tribe and it was a token that the land he lived on was his and that he could rule over his people as he liked and make his own laws and that he could also hunt and shoot when he liked and that white man could not interfere with him or his people so long as he was chief, then opening his coat he showed a big silver medal he had pinned on his breast, this had a portrait of Simon Fraser stamped on it. This he told the court was given to him by Simon Fraser, who told him so long as he wore it, he and his tribe could fish in the Fraser river whenever and wheresoever they liked, but now as the old chief said these things did not seem to be true, their lands were going, times were getting hard with them, they were becoming old people, and unable to do much work, and when they went back of a necessity to rely on the hunting and fishing which they had always thought were their's through his tokens—well, a white policeman comes on to his land among his people and arrests them and says the government say they don't know anything about these special privileges and that the Indian must obey the law like others. When he first was here there were no laws but his own and the great queen told him that his own law was good. Now the great queen dead, the government say his law no good and he must obey their's and he could not understand the position at all. We did our best to explain to him that the position of affairs was somewhat altered in these enlightened days, and that he and his tribe in spite of the fact of their much treasured tokens must at the same time obey the present day laws. This he promised to do somewhat sorrowfully and so we allowed the Indian in question to get off with a suspended sentence."

At that moment the whistle blew. The table applauded greatly. Evidently the steamer Peace River was the real thing. But next moment, whang—bang!—from the deck house above our heads the pilot's 38.55 began to go.

And then another luxurious member with a cigarette and his heels on the rail found himself staring at a three-hundred-pound black bear chasing frantically through the red-willow bushes along shore, much as a large Newfoundland pup might make frenzied time along the inside of a garden fence under the excitement of a passing train!

It was as sudden as that. And the whistle was blowing for another before those concealed guns could be dragged feverishly out again. Save for a few, enhancing touches demanded by the art of narration, those "H.B.C." navigators had not been joshing. Ten minutes more, and we had seen a third full-grown bear get to cover, and a fourth! Every weapon in the party, from a ".22" that shot only about half the distance to a .405 automatic express, later to be used against African elephants, was brought into play in the sulphurous half circle behind the forward rail. By sundown, of smoking shells you might have gathered up a dustpanful from the deck where the excited Nimrod had dropped them.

For two mornings and two evenings the shooting went on. We saw seventeen bears in all. We killed three—two black and one brown. And originally it was the intention to make this a hunting story. But it would not do. We killed those three bears in the water, swimming and defenseless. It was not sport. For days we had bear liver and haunch and tenderloin and "the juicy bear steaks," made gorgeously succulent to our youth by the pages of R. M. Ballantyne.

But all alike left a taste in the month. It was not sport. The half-breed deckhands who hung over the bows and made lines fast about the big clumsy bodies and then used the capstan to haul them aboard might quite as easily have killed those bears with axes, as in fact, on the Peace, it has often been done. There is an Alice-in-Wonderland effect about shooting bears between courses; in doing it from a steamer chair after laying down the latest magazine. But, as I remember Alice, there was good stuff in her, and I don't think she would have smiled upon that sort of thing at all.

There is, however, some tale to be told of a river where in half as many hunting hours seventeen bears may be seen. Later we heard of seven being seen together, of twenty-eight passed in three hours, of more than seventy counted in a four-day voyage upstream. And we no longer doubted. If elsewhere upon this planet there is any such bear river, it should send in its postoffice address at once.

The Peace is about as wide as the Hudson in the Catskills. It flows northeast from the Canadian Rockies to Lake Athabasca. And for five hundred and eighty miles, from above Hudson Hope to below Fort Vermilion, it is navigable. It offers, indeed, one of the longest uninterrupted stretches of stream navigation in America. Up in the foothills toward the Rockies there is still a famous grizzly country, which must be dealt with in some other place.

From the Grand Prairie country, into which there has already begun a rush of wagoning homesteaders east to Hudson Bay, the land is one vast game preserve. Moose and caribou are equally plentiful, to say nothing of wild geese and swan and every kind of duck. The banks and islands of the Peace are for their part one varied and continuous berry patch. Berries, from the wild strawberry of June to the mild saskatoon of September, are the chosen fat producer of the black bear.

And therefore, from all the back trails and uplands in due season do the black bears descend. The Peace gets them all for a hundred miles around. Here and there, in the few places where the bluffs are bald, you can make out their beaten tracks like narrower cow paths. And everywhere you find their tunnels under the bushes.

They come down to feed in the cool beginning and end of the day and lie up in the spruce and poplar woods during the heat. They seem to have no quarrel with one another. From a single small island we routed three. Unless wounded, or accompanied by cubs, they are little more dangerous than as many big, long-haired pigs. All they want is to fill themselves in peace. And, according to those who know, when a large, hungry "musqua" sits back on his hunkers and with a right and left cycle motion of his fore paws gathers the berry-bush tops to his mouth as to a kind of cutting-box, his chomping of gastronomic happiness keeping him from hearing even a stern-wheeler till it is all but on his beam.

litter of magazines and a choice of steamer chairs. One luxurious member, who had discovered that the bathroom possessed steam-pipe connections, proceeded to lay himself out in the cleanly porcelain and indulge in a Turkish bath. This, too, eight days by trail and river north of Edmonton.

Meanwhile at the table the importing of bear information continued earnestly. On the preceding trip, so far as the officers of the Peace River could conscientiously estimate, they had seen between twenty-five and thirty. These were, of course, only black and brown bears. But there were grizzlies (also cinnamoms and silver tips) farther back toward the mountains.

At that moment the whistle blew. The table applauded greatly. Evidently the steamer Peace River was the real thing. But next moment, whang—bang!—from the deck house above our heads the pilot's 38.55 began to go.

And then another luxurious member with a cigarette and his heels on the rail found himself staring at a three-hundred-pound black bear chasing frantically through the red-willow bushes along shore, much as a large Newfoundland pup might make frenzied time along the inside of a garden fence under the excitement of a passing train!

It was as sudden as that. And the whistle was blowing for another before those concealed guns could be dragged feverishly out again. Save for a few, enhancing touches demanded by the art of narration, those "H.B.C." navigators had not been joshing. Ten minutes more, and we had seen a third full-grown bear get to cover, and a fourth! Every weapon in the party, from a ".22" that shot only about half the distance to a .405 automatic express, later to be used against African elephants, was brought into play in the sulphurous half circle behind the forward rail. By sundown, of smoking shells you might have gathered up a dustpanful from the deck where the excited Nimrod had dropped them.

For two mornings and two evenings the shooting went on. We saw seventeen bears in all. We killed three—two black and one brown. And originally it was the intention to make this a hunting story. But it would not do. We killed those three bears in the water, swimming and defenseless. It was not sport. For days we had bear liver and haunch and tenderloin and "the juicy bear steaks," made gorgeously succulent to our youth by the pages of R. M. Ballantyne.

But all alike left a taste in the month. It was not sport. The half-breed deckhands who hung over the bows and made lines fast about the big clumsy bodies and then used the capstan to haul them aboard might quite as easily have killed those bears with axes, as in fact, on the Peace, it has often been done. There is an Alice-in-Wonderland effect about shooting bears between courses; in doing it from a steamer chair after laying down the latest magazine. But, as I remember Alice, there was good stuff in her, and I don't think she would have smiled upon that sort of thing at all.

There is, however, some tale to be told of a river where in half as many hunting hours seventeen bears may be seen. Later we heard of seven being seen together, of twenty-eight passed in three hours, of more than seventy counted in a four-day voyage upstream. And we no longer doubted. If elsewhere upon this planet there is any such bear river, it should send in its postoffice address at once.

The Peace is about as wide as the Hudson in the Catskills. It flows northeast from the Canadian Rockies to Lake Athabasca. And for five hundred and eighty miles, from above Hudson Hope to below Fort Vermilion, it is navigable. It offers, indeed, one of the longest uninterrupted stretches of stream navigation in America. Up in the foothills toward the Rockies there is still a famous grizzly country, which must be dealt with in some other place.

From the Grand Prairie country, into which there has already begun a rush of wagoning homesteaders east to Hudson Bay, the land is one vast game preserve. Moose and caribou are equally plentiful, to say nothing of wild geese and swan and every kind of duck. The banks and islands of the Peace are for their part one varied and continuous berry patch. Berries, from the wild strawberry of June to the mild saskatoon of September, are the chosen fat producer of the black bear.

And therefore, from all the back trails and uplands in due season do the black bears descend. The Peace gets them all for a hundred miles around. Here and there, in the few places where the bluffs are bald, you can make out their beaten tracks like narrower cow paths. And everywhere you find their tunnels under the bushes.

They come down to feed in the cool beginning and end of the day and lie up in the spruce and poplar woods during the heat. They seem to have no quarrel with one another. From a single small island we routed three. Unless wounded, or accompanied by cubs, they are little more dangerous than as many big, long-haired pigs. All they want is to fill themselves in peace. And, according to those who know, when a large, hungry "musqua" sits back on his hunkers and with a right and left cycle motion of his fore paws gathers the berry-bush tops to his mouth as to a kind of cutting-box, his chomping of gastronomic happiness keeping him from hearing even a stern-wheeler till it is all but on his beam.

But the whistle, between the Peace's hollow shores, starts echoes which in one gaping moment convince him that the Philistines are upon him from all sides at once. If he is feeding on an island, he makes a headlong rush for the mainland. If on the mainland, he will often plunge in and attempt to gain an imagined safety on the other side of the river. Hence the water shooting.

The Bush Crees of the country take advantage of steamer and whistle for what summer bear hunting they are compelled to do. No Cree kills a bear at such a season for his hide. A peltry for which the Hudson's Bay Company or Revillon's would pay twelve dollars in March will not bear a dollar and a half in August. The skin is "unprime"; the hair will come away with the first combing. The summer killing is made solely for the meat and lard.

The Indian knows how little chance he has of getting his bear if he has to follow him through a mile of raspberry and saskatoon thickets. Accordingly, on almost every elbow along the river and, above all, opposite every big berry island, you can see the bare lodge poles of a teepee where a Cree with a hauled-up dugout has lain in wait for civilization to come to his assistance. The whistle brings out his bear and gives him the safe, deliberate water shot. His only care is to put the bullet through the head. A shot through the body would send the bear to the bottom. But, saying it again from an ill conscience, it is not sport.

On the Peace, the real sports in the bear-hunting business, those who are ready to take a chance with their fun, are four-footed. In March or April the bear has just come out or is still "denning up." His fur is at its best. If awake he is on the keen edge both for food and trouble. And, the hunting is done with dogs. A Cree bear-dog is, for lack of outward embellishment, no plus ultra and facile princeps. He has no pedigree and he has no style. He even fights with his tail between his legs. But as all have borne witness who have watched him work, he knows his job.

The hunter takes the snowshoe trail with, it may be, five or six. But rarely are more than two or three "broken" dogs. The others are to get their breakfast shortly and in the kind of school where one learns only once. Where a bear is "denning up," no matter how many feet of snow are covering him, his breath will always make a big, blue-ice-blow-hole. A bear-dog can scent such a blow-hole for at least a mile.

Accordingly when the party has reached bear country the dogs will begin to "range." That is, they leave the trail and strike it again only after making half circles of a mile or more in radius. One "broken" dog will go to the right, the other to the left. Again and again they swing back across the trail, pick up the man, make their silent report, and swing out on the next half circle. But sooner or later a dog will not come back, and then the man calls in the remainder of the pack and in his turn leaves the trail. Unless the dog has met a ranging timber wolf—in which case, by the time the rest of the party arrive, that timber wolf will probably be eating him—there is a bear to be prodded out.

Breaking the Dogs. Now a bear has feelings about being roused before his regular hour, even as you and I. And when he has been awakened with a stick, he is very angry indeed. And here the green dogs have their first chance to go wrong. One of them may seek to show his mettle by thrusting his head into the blow-hole—and very likely have most of it taken off. Or when the bear has humped himself furiously out, another dog may make the mistake of attacking him in front.

So attacked, a bear will at once settle back upon his haunches. He will begin to slap his hands to and fro with the seeming impotence of a fat man in hot weather making a last attempt to drive the flies away. And a black bear's general sloppiness of movement makes his slappings seem weak and without direction, too. As a matter of fact, when a dog is caught so once, there is rarely any occasion for him to be caught a second time.

But the dog that comes out of it only moderately damaged has taken the vital step in the business of his "breaking." He will forever afterwards have the clearest idea of a bear's fighting reach when he extends. He will have a score to settle with the whole bear family that will lead him to run for a week any time to get his revenge on one of them. And he will never again tackle a bear in front.

The "broken" bear-dog, one on each side, goes to the flanks. He knows that a bear has a more than Napoleonic aversion to attacking with his rear in jeopardy. The first nip, and his forward plunge ends in a frothing jerk to the right about and a gnashing settling down again. When he turns to the left, he gets it on the right. And he gets it on the right the instant he swings to the left again. It is not that the dogs are afraid. Not one of them but has his scars, and few of them live to be old. But it is their business to keep that bear where he is till the hunter can choose his shot.

A local trapper, Joe My-goose, was making the ten-mile round of his mink and marten snares, accompanied by his dogs, but with no thought of bear whatever, when they flushed a grizzly. Joe My-goose was carrying a ".22," shooting "shorts"—the sort of popgun that is used for prairie chicken. Not only that, but the first thing he did under the stress of the



## Sportsman's Calendar

APRIL  
Season for all game fish now open— Trout, salmon, bass, char.  
Geese may be shot but not sold.  
N.B.—Non-resident anglers can only fish in British Columbia on taking out a license.

occasion was to get one of his snowshoes caught fast in a post-willow root.  
Joe My-goose might well believe that his goose was cooked, but his dogs proved equal even to that. It took the great, rapidly whirling brute five minutes to make twice as many yards. The little popgun could only bleed him; it required more than fifty of the tiny shells to do the business. But they did it in the end. For both dogs, it was their last hunting—Outing.

## FORTY MINUTES ON THE GRASS

Madge and I are a sporting pair  
With next to nothing a year;  
Somehow or other it doesn't seem fair  
That we should have never a penny to spare  
While the man next door is a millionaire.  
But I don't intend my time to spend  
By wailing about it here!

What I was going to say is this...  
From Gollan to Guelder Thorn,  
By the train we take when we visit Cis,  
We have forty minutes of stolen bliss,  
Forty minutes we would not miss,  
In the pink of the vale (per Northern Mail)  
At a pace would rattle the Quorn.

For though we haven't a single box,  
A horse, or saddle, or stall,  
And though we live on financial rocks,  
And mutely suffer Dame Fortune's knocks,  
We were both of us entered young to fox,  
And a ticket's price is a harmless vice  
And the railway's free to all!

We sit in the carriage hand in hand  
Watching the fields go by;  
In each of us fancy's fires are fanned  
By the clean wind clipping the pasture land,  
And each of us rides on a line we've planned  
At a reckless rate over rail and gate,  
Imagining—Madge and I.

Tickets at Gollan Bridge they check,  
Then no more checks till the end!  
Away we glide over bank and beck,  
The game is a-foot and the dance on deck,  
And our fox must sail if he'd save his neck,  
For it's fence and ditch and the de'il cares  
which  
With forty minutes to spend!

Hounds are racing away, away—  
(Can't you see 'em?—The worse for you!)  
Madge is riding the bang-tailed bay  
She rode as a girl. I'm up on the grey  
That carried me many a bachelor day.  
Here's a deuce of a place; but we cram in the  
pace  
For we've got to get over or through!

Field after field of grass we ride  
With fences coming like fun;  
"Where will you tackle it, Madge?—I'd  
Have it up there where the ditch is wide!  
Look out for that hole on the take-off side!"  
You must slacken your rein if you'd keep with  
the train  
When you're riding a railway run!

Poor?—Not we; who can taste at will  
Our forty minutes by rail!  
If we take our chance of a (fancied) spill  
We can ride the whole of it, dip and hill,  
From the scrambling start to the splendid kill  
When we've caught our fox at the signal-box  
In the style of the Blackmoor Vale!  
—W. H. Ogilvie.

Dealer—"E jumps well, 'e trots beautiful,  
'e's as quiet as a lamb, and I'll let you 'ave 'im  
cheap."  
Purchaser—"Why—what's wrong with  
him?"

The wife of a clergyman warned him as he went off to officiate at a funeral one rainy day:  
"Now, John, don't stand with your bare head on the damp ground; you'll catch cold."