

Field Sports at Home and Abroad

THE BUSINESS ASPECT OF OUR GAME SUPPLY

The commercial side of game protection is the very last which appeals to the sportsman, but in these days of commercialism it seems to be the only side which appeals to the average business man and legislator who is not also a sportsman. Doubtless for this reason the Vancouver Island Fish and Game Club is distributing at its own expense in pamphlet form a reprint of a speech delivered by Dr. E. Breck before the Halifax Board of Trade, which is a masterly exposition of the question of Fish and Game protection from the standpoint of pure business.

We have not sufficient space to reproduce the whole pamphlet, but have pleasure in printing herewith as much as the space at disposal will allow.

The following extract has been taken from "The Morning Chronicle" of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and if it is true that the fish and game of Nova Scotia should produce a revenue of \$12,000,000 annually, the question of what the fish and game of British Columbia should be worth to the Province if properly protected and put on a "business footing," immediately presents itself to anyone interested in the matter.

British Columbia has made very big strides in game protection during the last few years, but very much more still remains to be done if the Province is to derive the full benefit from one of its best assets, one which for many years, if properly administered could be made to yield an enormous revenue. That this is no idle statement is proved by what other countries with not one half of the supply of fish and game with which British Columbia is blessed, have done.

This extract has been put in the form of a pamphlet by the Vancouver Island Fish and Game Club with the hope that many of those who now look upon "game protectionists" as cranks, will be inclined to alter their views and help them to attain the object they have in view.

Dr. Breck said: It is very difficult to talk about hunting and fishing from the standpoint of pure business. So many look at it as a pastime only, and one that can be indulged only by the rich or those living near the woods. What expression is more common than "O I don't care anything about sport; never had a fishing rod in my hand, etc." But how many mine-owners ever had a pick in their hands or how many deep-sea fish operators ever handled a line or trimmed a sail? It is hard to forget the sentimental side of sport. But this is just what I want you to do now. Nobody on earth appreciates the other side better than I—the beauty of the woods, the excitement, the health-giving outing, and all that. I could, if I were speaking before an anglers' or hunters' club, indulge in ecstasies as dithyrambic as any poet's, but here and now I want you to regard me solely as you would the agent for any new industry that I feel will help enrich our Province. If there is anything that has been dinned into my ears since I came to Nova Scotia, and it is the burden of every speaker from Earl Grey down, it is that this Province is a really rich but undeveloped country.

Now I stand here to call your attention to an industry which has never been developed to any extent, but in which I am convinced there are riches for us. If taken up and managed purely as a business proposition, I mean the exploitation of our game and inland fisheries, which is, of course, mainly a part of the tourist industry. It is no new idea, but one that has certainly not been appreciated at any where near its proper value.

We are met here by the first objection, which comes mostly from a certain class of short-sighted sportsmen, who say: "Our game and fish for ourselves!"

This would be a legitimate cry if by selling our goods to foreigners we lessened the supply of our own people. But I shall try to show you that this is far from the case. The truth is the exact opposite. This old cry is as silly as if a cloth manufacturer or an apple-grower should say, "Our products for ourselves!" That would be a fine business man indeed! On the contrary a modern nation's commercial status is pretty nearly measured by the amount of its exports.

On this side of the Atlantic we nearly all believe in protection. Well, we protect our game and fish by a tariff just as our other products, only instead of a tax we impose a license. But this is the best of all taxes for us, for the reason that the foreigner pays not only it, but comes among us and spends many times as much while he is here.

It is an axiom that, without enforced law, game speedily disappears, and also fish though less quickly, being more numerous.

For many years the carrying out of the provisions of the Game Act was in the hands of the old Game Society, to which we must ever be grateful, for it stood between our game and its extermination.

When a new business is started the owners, if they are wise, study the methods of some similar institution that has notoriously made a great success in the same line. Such an institution for our purposes is the State of Maine, which is only about one-third larger than Nova Scotia, and by no means more favored by Nature so far as fish and game are concerned, as we have moose where she has deer plus a very few moose. But do you know how much it is estimated that Maine receives

every year as indirect revenue from non-resident sportsmen? Anywhere from \$15,000,000 to \$25,000,000! Let us split the difference and say \$20,000,000. Maine charges a big game fee of \$15, half as much as we do, and nothing for fishing, but her direct income from licenses alone is nevertheless over \$30,000 a year. As for the indirect income, many short-sighted people, whose grounding in the laws of economy is shaky, will say, "Oh, that's all very nice for the guides, but it doesn't help us!"

Much Money for All

But what is the fact? From the very moment a man in Boston puts his hand into his pocket to buy his ticket for Yarmouth or Halifax he begins to add to the revenues of Nova Scotia, and he continues to contribute to our coffers at every step he takes on our soil. Now does all this money go to the guide. Of course not.

Warden Jenner, now departed, but still helping us by his magnificent example, said that, at a conservative estimate, every sportsman who came here spent at least \$200 on an average, but this is so small; it will be nearer \$300. Maine has been at this job in a businesslike way for many years, and this year's report of her Game and Fish Commission says, speaking of money expended on fish hatcheries: "For every dollar spent on trout-hatcheries the State has received three hundred!" That seems a pretty good proposition? And nobody ever heard of a State of Maine man complain that catering to non-residents has spoiled his own fishing or hunting, for he knows better.

Now, how is it in our sister Province, New Brunswick? Just the same, though in a less degree, for they have been a shorter time at the game. Ten years ago the appropriation for game protection was the same as ours; now it is \$35,000, or \$15,000 outside of direct income. She receives directly from licenses about \$33,000 a year, and from this you may make a guess at her indirect revenue from sport. In 1905 it was \$20,000; in 1908, \$35,000. This increase was the result of advertising.

On our area, as compared with these two States, we should now be enjoying at least ten or twelve millions of revenue, besides having better sport for ourselves. Now, why is this unfortunately by no means the case? And why have our neighbors prospered?

Simply because of lack of appreciation, and the failure to see that our sporting asset must be treated as any big business enterprise is.

What does Maine do?

In the first place she grants no monopolies of fishing or hunting rights on uncultivated lands. She employs over 100 wardens, many of them salaried, and some receiving as high as \$1,400 a year. There are over 2,000 guides, paying a dollar a year for registration. She maintains eight first-class fish-hatcheries under trained superintendents, and has just appropriated the money for still another. She has a Game, Fish and Forest Commission of three gentlemen, all experts, one to look after game, one fish, and the third forests, and these men are highly salaried, for they give all their time to their tasks, and do not regard them as side-issues, as with us.

Maine's Big Outlay

Maine this year has voted \$47,500 out of the public treasury for fish and game interests, besides \$2,000 for an additional hatchery. Deducting the \$20,000 received for licenses, we have over \$27,000, put into the business to keep up the plant, as it were, and Maine considers this a pretty good proposition, inasmuch as she receives in return so many millions of indirect revenue. Can there be any question that she is right?

The Provincial Government has nothing to say about the inland fisheries, and the result is that our salmon are going fast, our trout are the victims of the fish-hog, and our streams are most inadequately restocked. If you could read the letters I have received from all over the Province from such men as T. R. Paillo, Sheriff Smith, of Digby, and others who are in positions to know what they are talking about you would hear sad tales of the inadequacy of our wardens, and especially of the fisheries officers.

I suppose you are aware that many more people come here to fish than to hunt, and yet every cent of the fees demanded of alien fishermen now goes to the Dominion treasury, not to ours, and what do we get in return? A most beggarly pittance in the way of protection.

This money should come to us, as it does in other Provinces where the people become sick of such treatment and take matters into their own hands.

Must Advertise Our Goods

Now, gentlemen, one final consideration. It is not enough to have a fine plant and to turn out even the best of goods. We must bring them to the notice of the buyers.

Maine, Newfoundland, New Brunswick, Québec, and other States and Provinces are alive to the efficacy of advertising. It is certainly one of the commonplaces of business today that advertising is a prime necessity. These other places never fail to be well represented at every sportsman's show; they have their sporting advantages worked up in the newspapers and magazines; their chief railways and steamship lines get out fine pamphlets devoted to sport alone.

What do we want in this important line?

The I. C. R. has issued a really beautiful "Forest, Stream and Seashore" booklet, part of which treats of Nova Scotia. All honor to its enterprise. The D. A. R. devotes only a chapter to sport in its pretty "Vacation Days." The Canadian Northern publishes a meagre pamphlet, the "Road to Sport," part of which is devoted to sport on our South West shore.

Sport Seldom Touched On

Sport is barely touched upon in the many local summer resort pamphlets and folders. We have never been represented at any sportsman's show. Truly it may be said that we have hidden our light under a bushel. And it is a thousand pities, for we have the goods and there are thousands eager to buy them if we but place them in sight. All this is very, very little.

We must advertise. And here it may, perhaps, be forgiven me if I mention the forthcoming "Sporting Guide," authorized by the Maritime Board of Trade, which will appear in a few weeks, and which I trust will be supported by all good Nova Scotians, and prove a source of revenue to our Province. It is not a very elegant publication, and not by any means perfect, but its facts are true and as a first edition, I hope not so bad.

In conclusion I feel that I have been playing rather the part of the "kicker," of the iconoclast who pulls down, and you will ask of me what should be done to remedy matters.

The obvious answer is that we should imitate whatever has been proved successful by our neighbors in other Provinces. Our Provincial Government should administer a magnificent enterprise as a business proposition, and the results will justify us a thousandfold. The railway and steamship and hotel services must needs expand and improve, and the whole Province will enormously benefit. We sportsmen are open to this suspicion of prejudice—it is to you business men we look to convince our legislators.

Whenever any steps are taken to change matters in the Game Act, the legislators are disposed to treat the matter as a joke more than anything else. "Oh, let us alone," is the frequent cry when amendments to it are sought, but the fact must be impressed on them that the Game Laws are in a state of flux, like the budget, and need revising every year. When the legislators are educated to that view the cause of game protection will be much advanced.

THE ENEMIES OF GAME BIRDS

Game enemies and the methods of controlling them by a practical man may be of interest to your readers in connection with your articles on how to preserve the prairie grouse and other American game birds.

First of all comes that cunning little rogue, the sparrow hawk. The ordinary observer, who notes his handsome appearance and sees him balanced in midair in search of his prey little dreams of the terror he is when once he has discovered a flock of tasty young game birds. I have seen him return after time to the same part of the field where young game was to be found, and each time he departed the flock was one less, and I have shot him after his meal and taken the entire head of a week old pheasant from his crop.

In the early spring, when the pasture is short cropped and young birds are scarce, he kills quantities of mice. Of that there is no doubt, but later, when the grass is longer and mice hard to find, he takes heavy toll from the young game birds who seek the open sunny spots to bask and dust in. It is at this time he is the busiest, for there is a brooding wife and later a family of hungry youngsters to provide for, and he is an indulgent father in this respect. It is in the early spring that his case should be attended to, as he is then more easily approached. Especially this is true where he is mating, and often a well placed right and left will leave two less enemies to our feathered game.

Pole traps are very useful in places frequented by sparrow hawks, and if they are set with a little judgment they will seldom destroy any of our song birds, with the exception of an occasional woodpecker, and where these are plentiful the jaws of the trap should be well bound with some soft material (strips of flannel will do) and when a song bird is caught it will not be seriously damaged and can be liberated. Sparrow hawks make their nests in hollow trees or limbs and such trees should be visited in the spring, and, where possible, a round hawk trap placed in the bottom of the hole. Female hawks will be destroyed by this method and every one destroyed means a brood less later.

After the young game birds are two weeks old there is not much danger from the smaller hawks, but the larger species, the most daring of which is the sharp shinned hawk, then require attention. Pole traps are useful for the destruction of this species also, especially in the open country, and even in the woods a well placed pole trap will often exact heavy toll. The traps should be attended to every day, as it is bad policy to leave a bird swinging any longer than is necessary. The poles can be so arranged that they can be seen from a central point with a pair of glasses, and thus much unnecessary walking can be avoided.

When the birds grow larger they attract the attention of the copper and red tailed hawk. A good rifle shot and a good rifle are very useful to destroy these game enemies, but failing one or both of these, it is a good plan to kill a few rabbits and use them as baits. One rabbit will make two baits, and

where there are ground vermin to deal with the entrails will come in handy either for trapping rats and weasels or for conveying poison to crows and skunks. The best method to use the bait for the larger hawks is to cut the rabbit in half and then peg down one half in a place near a tree where the hawk is in the habit of resting. Place a trap on each side of the bait, sinking the traps slightly below the level of the ground, cover the traps with grass cut fine so that they are hardly noticeable from the surrounding ground. Repeat this in several likely places, and the chances are that you won't have long to wait for Mr. Hawk.

Crows are very destructive to the eggs and young of almost every species of game, and if the game is to be saved. Crows are especially fond of young ducklings, and where these are raised on the farm means for their protection must be devised. The best method of protection is to kill the crows. There are many methods of doing this. Poisoned entrails and poisoned eggs can be used to advantage where this is lawful, and trapping can be done to baits as described for hawks. Trapping in the snow by means of blood spilled on the snow and a steel trap placed nearby, destroying the nests in the breeding season, waiting for the crows with shot guns as they come in to roost, all are effective methods of destruction. (The Game Commissioner of Illinois and his aids disposed of 2,800 crows by this method in two seasons.) The watchword when crows are about is keep killing them, especially where the flocks run up into the thousands.

Another egg robber not so well known is the red headed woodpecker. I have shot this thief as he carried the egg of a wood duck over my head, and I have seen him even rob the chicken coop. Blue jays also take eggs, more especially those of song birds, but where song birds are scarce game eggs suffer. Baited traps will dispose of those addicted to the egg stealing habit.

Among the four footed enemies of our game, which include foxes, mink, coons, cats, weasels, rats, skunks and roving dogs, there is none worse than the cat, especially the cat which has developed the habit of roving the fields. A cat is a most useful animal around a farm so long as she keeps to her legitimate occupation of killing rats and mice, and I would not deny her a few gophers, but once she has tasted young game, be it rabbit, pheasant or grouse, she is no longer of service to her owner, but becomes a terror to the game. One good thing about the cat is that she will often return to partly eaten game, and it is thus easy to put an end to her poaching.

Where a bird or rabbit is found partly eaten it is always a wise policy to put down a steel trap at once, and always be sure and peg down the bait, as where this is not done, a hawk will often light directly on the bait and carry it off without touching the trap at all. Where a cat is suspected to be working, it is a good plan to kill a rabbit and divide it up as for a hawk bait. Place it where you think pussy will find it in her rambles. Cut some twigs about a foot high and make a fence around the bait, horseshoe fashion, with the bait in the inside of the bend. Then in the entrance of the horseshoe place a good steel trap covered with cut grass or leaves and well staked down, and the chances are that pussy is in for a hot time next morning. In the summer it is very hard to keep baits fresh, but with a little care it is possible to keep up a good supply. Crows plucked and split open make a useful bait. Hawks also do for a turn. Rats are fine to trap weasels, and blue jays too, and even pussy herself, when skinned and divided up, makes a first class bait. If there is a roving dog about it is a good plan to place a dead cat near his usual haunt for a day or two with a steel trap on either side, and even the spot where a dead cat has been has an attraction for both dogs and foxes.

Weasels are also bloodthirsty enemies of all game and because of their habits and cunning they are harder to control than most game enemies are. Bait trapping, as for cats, is useful in this case. Steel traps set in the mouths of old open tiles and drains will also reduce their number. A short hole made in a bank, the paunch of a rabbit or any strong scented bait placed inside and a trap set at the mouth of the hole will often spell disaster to Mr. Weasel.

When you hear the meadow lark or the song sparrow raising a racket in the grass it is a good plan to take a gun and sit quietly down for a time. The chances are you will get a peep at the murderer, and then it is up to you. Fire well ahead, as Mr. Weasel is very quick. I have cut his tail off close up more than once when I meant to cut off his head. If you catch one weasel it is a good plan to use it for a bait as it will often draw others to the spot. Especially is this so in the spring, when they are breeding.

The mink is even more bloodthirsty than the weasel, but he is also a lot shyer, which is a good thing for the game. The increase in the population is often given as the cause of the decrease in game, but this is not the only reason. When the game had the whole country to sport in, the minks and other vermin had to hustle around to get a living. With the increase of population the game had to pack up closer. So also had the vermin, and while no one was killing the vermin both the hunter and vermin were killing the game. The result was the disappearance of the game and incidentally the disappearance of the vermin, since there is no food left to support it.

Minks can be combated in many ways, and different districts require different methods, but persistent trapping is always the safest



Sportsman's Calendar

JUNE

Trout, salmon, grilse.

The best month for Sea-trout fishing.

plan. Watch carefully the soft places along the creek for tracks then set your traps in the likeliest looking spots, taking care to disturb the ground as little as possible. Cover your traps with material similar to that which surrounds it, taking care that no stones or pieces of wood are mixed with the covering, material or else you will have a small bit of fur but no mink in the morning. Leave the traps set for several days in one position and handle as little as possible. It is a good plan to wear a pair of gloves when handling trap for vermin so as to leave as little scent as possible.

There are different traps made to take mink alive, but they all require special conditions to make them successful and are useless on the open fields.

The coon is fond of a mixed diet, but game of all sorts and sizes are included in his menu. I have known a case where he killed over 100 birds in one night simply for the love of slaughter. In this instance the birds were confined in a run about 200 feet long by 12 broad, so old ringtail had a picnic, but where the birds are unconfined I do not believe the coon is as persistent a hunter as the mink and weasel are. Coons are easily trapped at the open ends of drain pipes and along the shallow edges of the creeks, also at the entrances of hollow trees, and occasionally they will take a bait. A good dog is useful where coons occur, and once the brute is treed a charge of No. 5 shot settles all disputes between coon and keeper.

Skunks do a lot of mischief during the nesting season, their slow, pottering habits making them more dangerous to sitting birds and eggs than their quicker moving brethren are. Open tiles are a favorite resort. I trapped 14 skunks within three weeks at the entrance of one dry drain pipe. Underneath the dry stumps of fallen timber also are favorite resorts for vermin, and careful trapping will soon clear out the dangerous enemies of our game both furry and feathered.—John Thompson, Gamekeeper, in The Amateur Sportsman

PHEASANTS BENEFICIAL

According to Professor W. H. Olin, industrial commissioner of the Denver, Laramie and Northwestern Railway, pheasants, especially the Chinese ringneck and the English varieties, are the most valuable insectivorous birds as well as the most attractive and eagerly sought game birds of all the species that can be reared in captivity of in a semi-domestic way and kept in the district in which they are propagated. The great majority of the insectivorous birds are migratory, while the pheasant, especially the varieties named, becomes attached to a locality and will breed and remain there as long as it is protected and can secure food.

The pheasant is naturally an insectivorous bird, and where insect food is obtainable it will eat comparatively little else. The variety of the insect food of the pheasant is larger than that of any other bird, so far as is known. Investigation shows that over 130 species of insects and earthworms are eaten by the pheasant, and doubtless many more will be found on its menu.

In addition to this it is fond of small rodents, such as field mice, young gophers and small snakes. In England pheasants have been found choked to death in the attempt to swallow worms larger or longer than they could manage, and several pheasants have been found dead, choked by small rodents. Fred Barnett, superintendent of the pheasantries at City Park, Denver, says that a pheasant hen will catch and destroy a mouse as quickly as a cock pheasant or a cat.

MIGHT-HAVE-BEENS

Here is a story from Frank Ormerod's "Lancashire Life and Character."

On one occasion a census clerk in scanning one of the forms to see that it had been properly filled up, noticed the figures 620 and 112 under the heading, "Age of father, if living," and "Age of mother, if living."

"But your parents were never so old were they?" queried the astonished clerk.

"Now," was the reply, "but they would have been if livin'."

DEFINED

A committee consists of a dozen of men; One-half of them constantly shrink, Five more superintend in an arrogant way, And one does the whole of the work.