

## Game Legislation.

BY J. A. M'DOUGALL.

All Canadian sportsmen must admire the sound common sense, as well as the enthusiasm, now displayed by the Game Commissioners of most of our provinces. The old order has passed away and given place to the new, very much to the advantage of legitimate sport. Until quite recently our game laws were a farce, often ridiculous, and invariably poorly enforced, but in three provinces at least, namely, New Brunswick, Ontario and Manitoba, an earnest effort has been made of late to enforce the laws, and good results may already be seen.

There can be no doubt that duck were more abundant in 1900 in Ontario than had been the case for a dozen years, and perhaps they would have been as abundant in 1901 had the season not been so dry; of course when all the sloughs and marshes are dry one cannot expect wildfowl to tarry on their way south, as they do when the ponds and lakes are full to overflowing.

Several very important changes have been made in the Ontario game laws this year, mostly in line with the recommendations of the Ontario Game Commissioners in their report for 1901, and most of the changes, if not all of them, are for the better. A bounty of fifteen dollars for every wolf killed and produced should result in the destruction of a great number of these horrible beasts. Unless one has really seen the amount of damage they can do it is quite impossible to realize how thoroughly they can clear a well stocked range of its deer. A friend of mine, a woodsman, who has done a large amount of timber cruising, tells me that whenever he leaves the settlements behind he very soon misses the tracks of the deer, finding, instead, nothing but evidences of the ravages committed by the wolves. He has convinced himself that a great many moose calves are destroyed, although the mature animals are tolerably safe, excepting from very large packs in the depth of winter, when yarded.

It seems a pity that hounding is legal, because, notwithstanding the number of persons who advocate this form of sport, most old hunters know that hounds do a deal of mischief. But though opposed to hounding myself, I am not one of those who think that still hunting will not equally clean out the deer, for it will, though not so rapidly, nor with the same certainty. In the western states of the Union, where much of the land is open and still hunting easy, game has been exterminated over large areas by men who never owned a single hound, but who used their Winchesters with deadly skill. Yet this question has but an academic interest, because I do not think hounding will ever be prohibited in Ontario, for, after all, the game belongs to the people, and the people seem, as a body, in favor of hounding. That part of the county of Bruce, known as the Indian Peninsula, is alone exempt from the curse, as "sub-section 4 of section 8, chapter 49, of 63 Victoria," specially prohibits capturing, wounding or killing deer while in, or immediately after leaving, any river, lake or other water. The recommendation made by the Commissioners for the prohibition of hounding north of the main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway, was not adopted, but up to now little hounding has been done in that sparsely settled region.

The Commissioners seem to think that if woodduck and woodcock shooting were prohibited in the states bordering on Canada, and if the Canadian provinces also extended their protection to these birds, that much good would result, but information in my possession makes me think that the real damage is done much farther south. I am convinced that were they to make further enquiries the Commissioners would in the end be convinced that the woodduck and the woodcock are killed off in the extreme Southern States of the Union, where they winter. A few years ago they were