

# TOO MUCH KILLING?

## American Visitor Gives Us a Warning

I AM not one of those persons who come into a country for a few months and think he can tell the citizen the best and only way to solve his local problems. I believe that would be thoroughly stupid, but I have seen mistakes made and tragedies perpetrated in our own United States that should give, at least, food for thought.

Once our prairies teemed with buffalo—countless thousands. To-day, except for a few small protected herds and a few Northern Canadian Wood Buffalo, they are all gone. Once it looked as if they never could be cleaned out—but they are. It was done by man without any regard to conservation. Once our western lands were spotted with vast herds of antelope. Man decimated them almost to the vanishing point. It was only by great care and protection that the species was saved and is now coming back a little—a comparatively few only and in few places. Our large herds of wapiti (elk), once a plains animal, were slaughtered and driven to the protection of the forests. To-day they have sanctuary in our reservations but can, as they “work out” of the parks, be taken in limited areas, by licensed sportsmen—one bull to one licence-holder per year. I know of no State where a cow wapiti or cow moose can be taken at any time.

Destruction was done by man.

*IN the following article, written by H. WENDELL ENDICOTT and handed to us by the Minister of Internal Affairs, a visitor from America begs New Zealanders not to repeat the wild life mistakes of the United States*

At one time deer abounded in all parts of the eastern States. Fortunately there are still areas in those States where sportsmen can go and get his deer—limited to certain sections or counties. Each kill is reported to the State and carefully recorded. This deer population is certainly a great asset and brings in many “out-of-State” visitors, all of whom contribute liberally to the visited State in the way of licences, the hiring of guides (out-of-State visitors are required by law in most States to employ licensed guides—usually one guide to one hunter), transportation, supplies, hotels, camps, entertainment, etc. Even as it is, there are many areas where deer have gone forever. What at one time had seemed an endless supply has gradually faded out. I have been informed that 110,000 deer skins were shipped out of New Zealand last year. I know of two men who killed 1,200 deer in six months and estimated another 300 that they killed but couldn't retrieve owing to the

inaccessibility of the terrain. I have heard of kills that even surpassed those figures.

### Birds Too

In my younger days one would have said as he gazed upon “ricks” of ducks and geese that migrated across our country by the thousands and thousands—just clouds of them—that the supply would last forever. But such is not the case. Even with a short season and a federal limit of seven ducks and two geese per shooting day, one seldom reaches his limit. In various ways man has brought this about, such as destruc-

tion of breeding and feeding grounds as well as a steadily increasing number of eager hunters. We have been very late in taking up this problem—perhaps too late.

Our flocks of wild pigeons which, I am told, were in such quantities years ago as would often break the branches of trees when they came in to roost, are now a thing of the past. The last survivor of the fine heath hen, one old inhabitant of our Cape Cod area, passed out of existence a few years ago. The species is gone. In my youth Massachusetts offered excellent quail shooting—not so to-day. One rarely hears the whistle of the “Bob White.”

Some 40 or 50 years ago our markets were flooded with game—prairie chickens (now almost gone, but wholly protected), quail, ducks, partridges, and



*The head of a red deer brought down by a sportsman's rifle among the flax bushes in a South Island valley*



*NEW ZEALAND stalkers bringing out wapiti antlers from South Westland. In the United States the licensed sportsman may shoot one bull wapiti a year.*

other types of game. It was the commercial aspect that took the first and greatest toll—skins and meat for sale.

Again and again game which seemed endless in supply has, without protection, gradually and unsuspectingly disappeared, or been reduced to pathetically limited numbers. The major objective was to kill, kill, kill—the commercial and the sporting urge blundering forward supported by ruthless, ill-considered excuses and reasons.

The sale of game, or the product of game taken from our own regions, is in nearly every instance prohibited to-day by law. But such laws were fought step by step by powerful groups who had many a potent reason why freedom to “kill” should reign.

### A Tragic Pattern

Ours has been a tragic pattern. It is not a happy thing for me to say, but I can't help sensing that to-day in New Zealand there is that same urge to kill. The reports of hundreds and thousands of kills is a matter of common knowledge. The extinction of some varieties of game (game that we in the States would consider as great assets) has been ordered. This sentiment seems to extend quite broadly through the public at large—whether they ever handle a gun or not. I have heard many reasons why

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