

LET US SAVE THE BIRDS.

Speech of Hon. John F. Lacey, in the House of Representatives.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and having under consideration the bill (H. R. 6634) to enlarge the powers of the Department of Agriculture, prohibit the transportation by interstate commerce of game killed in violation of local laws, and for other purposes.

Mr. Chairman: This bill is one that has attracted a great deal of interest in various sections of the country. Horticulturists, agriculturists, and lovers of birds everywhere, as well as the League of American Sportsmen, and others interested in game and the protection of game all over the United States, have been strongly enlisted in its support.

Briefly, the bill provides for a few purposes only. First, it authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to utilize his department for the reintroduction of birds that have become locally extinct or are becoming so in some parts of the United States. There are some kinds of insectivorous birds and some kinds of game birds, that heretofore were abundant in many localities, which have become very scarce indeed, and in some localities entirely exterminated. The wild pigeon, formerly in this country in flocks of millions, has entirely disappeared from the face of the earth. Some hopeful enthusiasts have claimed that the pigeon would again be heard from in South America, but there seems to me no well grounded basis for this hope. In some localities certain kinds of grouse have almost entirely disappeared. This bill gives the Secretary of Agriculture power to aid in the reintroduction, which, I think, will prove a useful adjunct to the action of the States which have undertaken the preservation of the native wild birds.

The next purpose in the bill is to allow the Secretary of Agriculture to control the importation of foreign wild birds and foreign wild animals. If this law had been in force at the time the mistake was made in the introduction of the English sparrow, we should have been spared from the pestilential existence of that "rat of the air," that vermin of the atmosphere. But some gentlemen who thought they knew better than anybody else what the country needed, saw fit to import these little pests, and they have done much toward driving the native wild bird life out of the States. This bill provides that the Secretary may prevent the importation of the fruit bat, or the flying fox, the English sparrow, the starling, and other birds of that kind, which, in his discretion, he may regard as detrimental.

The necessity for a provision of this kind is obvious. The mongoose, a miserable, murderous animal that was introduced for the purpose of killing snakes in Jamaica—by the way, one member of the House asked me the other day what kind of a bird the mongoose was [laughter]—the mongoose has proved a nuisance and a pest worse than the serpent that it kills. It drove the rats in Jamaica to the trees, and the rat now there has become an arboreal animal. The rat still exists and keeps out of the way of the mongoose. But the birds of the island have been almost destroyed by this imported pest. A proper control on the part of the Secretary of Agriculture would prevent the importation of injurious foreign animals. Some gentlemen in California have suggested the propriety of introducing the fruit bat or the flying fox there, and this bill would prevent their importation. They would prove a great nuisance as the English rabbits in Australia and the Scotch thistle in Canada. Some patriotic son of Scotland wanted to see if the thistle would grow in Canada. He tried it, and there is no dispute about it now. It grows in Canada.

There is a compensation in the distribution of plants, birds, and animals by the God of nature. Man's attempt to change and interfere often leads to serious results. The French pink was introduced as a flower in Oregon, and it has spread throughout the wheat fields and become an injury to agriculture. The English yard plantain has become a great evil in New Zealand.

Rabbits were introduced in Australia, and to-day the most persistent efforts are necessary to keep them within endurable limits. The Russian thistle is spreading with great rapidity in the Dakotas, and though this plant has finally proved to have some value for forage, yet the people of the Northwest would be glad if that plant had never found a footing in that region.

It is important that the introduction of foreign wild birds and animals should be under competent legal supervision, and this bill will accomplish that result.

The next proposition in the bill, and that is the vital one of all, is to prohibit interstate commerce in birds and wild game—that is, insectivorous, useful birds, and wild game birds, and wild game of any kind killed in violation of local laws. Take the State of Georgia, that has enact-

ed most rigid laws for the protection of insectivorous birds and game birds. Trappers go there and catch quails, netting or trapping them, in violation of the local law, pack them in barrels or boxes, and ship them to other markets in the United States. It is done secretly. The result is that the market houses in other States have been utilized as places in which to dispose of these birds and animals killed in violation of the laws of the State. Game wardens of the various States have long desired some legislation of this kind by which they can stop the nefarious traffic in birds and game killed in defiance of their State laws.

Take the State which I have the honor in part to represent—the State of Iowa. A few years ago it was filled with prairie chickens; quails were abundant. A careful protection of the quail has recently resulted in an increase of those beautiful little birds; but the shipment of prairie chickens has still been going on until they have well nigh become extinct. This bill, if enacted into law, would enable the local authorities to prevent the transportation of these birds. It is perfectly evident, however, that such a law might be abused unless suitably guarded. Persons might make use of it for the purpose of black-mailing the carriers. Therefore a provision has been inserted in this bill by which carriers will not be held responsible for the shipment unless they have knowingly carried the forbidden articles. But the shipper can not plead ignorance, and when complaint is made against the carrier, he will transfer the responsibility of the crime to the shipper, and the result will be that the whole traffic can be broken up.

As to insectivorous birds, I saw an article going the rounds of the newspapers the other day purporting to give an interview between my friend from Illinois (Mr. Cannon) and myself. While the interview was not stated with entire accuracy, the general facts are true, and I will repeat it now as an illustration of one of the features of this bill.

When this bill was up in the House before on a motion to suspend the rules, my friend from Illinois raised the question of "no quorum." Two-thirds of the House were in favor of passing the bill, but there was not a quorum present; and the gentleman from Illinois raised that point and prevented further consideration of the bill. The next day I came to the House with my pockets full of most beautiful apples. They were fair to look upon, but were veritable dead sea fruit. I went around and offered them to my friend. He loves apples as well as I love birds. He opened them.

They were all perforated with the tunnels that the worms had dug in passing

through the fruit. I asked him if he had ever seen that condition in apples when he was a boy. He said no; it was a recent thing. I inquired whether he often saw an apple now that did not show the foul track of a worm through its interior. He said, "What of that?" "Well," said I, "my friend, the killing of the birds causes this condition. Man kills the birds that killed the insect that laid the egg that hatched the worm that defiled the apple. [Laughter.] Thus following back in something of the fashion of "The House that Jack Built," we reach the real cause of most of this trouble. The destruction of the insectivorous birds has resulted in the loss of our fruit. No wonder the farmers and horticulturists are interested in this proposition!

Objection was made to this bill upon the theory that it was a purely sentimental measure, and intended merely to strike at bird millinery. Not so. It is true, Mr. Chairman, that there is some sentiment in the bill; and it is a proper, a legitimate, sentiment. The love of birds is something that ought to be taught in every school. Their protection is something that ought to be inculcated in the mind of every boy and girl. I have always been a lover of the birds; and I have always been a hunter as well; for to-day there is no friend that the birds have like the true sportsman—the man who enjoys legitimate sport. He protects them out of season; he kills them in moderation in season. The game hog is an animal of 2 legs that is disappearing. May he soon become extinct! The game hog formerly had himself photographed surrounded by the fruits of a day's "sport," and regarded the photograph as imperfect unless he had 100 dead ducks, geese, or geese around him. To-day a true sportsman would be ashamed to be pictured in connection with a larger number of fowls than a decent share for an American gunner, having due regard to the preservation of the game for the future.

Mr. Clark, of Missouri. Is there anything in this bill to stop the operations of pot hunters?

Mr. Lacey. This bill is directed against the pot hunter. When you take away his market you destroy his occupation. Take away his market, or put that market under the surveillance of the game wardens, and the pot hunter must cease to carry on his nefarious traffic. He is the man who should have no friends on the floor of this House, or anywhere in the United States of America. He is the relentless enemy of all animal life. The States have awakened to the necessity of preserving what remains of bird life, with which nature so generously endowed our country. State laws of a vigorous character are enacted,

and a public sentiment has grown up in favor of the enforcement of the statutes.

But the facility of commerce in these days of rapid transit enables the violator of the State law to market the product of his crime at a distance, and thus defy the laws of his own Commonwealth. This bill will supply the present defect in the law, and a halt can be called upon the ruthless destruction and exportation of the small remains of our once apparently inexhaustible bird population.

Seton Thompson tells us that no wild bird or wild animal ever dies of old age. Their lives, sooner or later, always have a tragic end. When a wild animal makes a mistake the penalty is death.

The gulls, the scavengers of our bays and harbors, are now being killed for use as ornaments.

The plumes of the egret are especially sought after; and as their plumage is at its best when nesting the mother bird is shot while rearing its young, and the orphan family is destroyed that the mother's plumes may decorate the head gear of humanity.

There is one feature of bird protection with which this bill does not pretend to deal.

The plumage merchant has held out inducements to hunters which have well-nigh exterminated some of the most beautiful creatures in the world.

In a single sale in London, in 1898, 116,490 skins of humming birds and 228,289 bundles of Indian parrots were sold for decorative purposes. In that sale over 500,000 bird skins were disposed of.

It is a pitiful thing to contemplate the slaughter of such a multitude of these beauties for the gratification of human vanity. Many people are deeply interested in the proposition to forbid the importation of the plumage of foreign birds, but that would involve the attempt to reform the world before purifying ourselves.

We should cast the beam out of our own eye first. Let us take care of our own birds and game before attempting to go into the fields and forests of other lands.

By taking this course we will set an example to other countries and the good work of bird and game protection in America may serve as a model.

We have given an awful exhibition of slaughter and destruction, which may serve

as a warning to all mankind. Let us now give an example of wise conservation of what remains of the gifts of nature.

It is late. It is too late as to the wild pigeon. The buffalo is almost a thing of the past, but there still remain much to preserve, and we must act earnestly if we would accomplish good results.

Mr. Chairman, to the last section of this bill, which was designed to obviate the effect of the "original package" law in protecting the pot hunter, I have agreed to offer an amendment, putting it in such a form as I think will remove the only opposition that this bill has really encountered on the floor of the House. I will offer the amendment at the proper time as a substitute for section 5.

I love the people who love birds. The man or the woman who does not love birds ought to be classed with the person who has no love for music—fit only for "treason, stratagem and spoils." I would love to have a solo singer in every bush and a choir of birds in every tree top. At my own home I have set out Russian mulberries for the birds alone. The Russian mulberry begins to ripen while the blossoms are still coming out, and for three months there are blossoms and black fruit on the same tree. If you want to be popular with the birds of your community, set out some of these mulberries, and they will come from every quarter to the place where these trees are. The man who cultivates the birds will have the birds take care of him. They will care for his farm. They will destroy the insect pests, and the man who protects them will be successful wherever he may farm in the United States of America.

Mr. Shackelford. What about the birds that pick the cherries?

Mr. Lacey. Every bird that eats a cherry earns 10 cherries before he eats one.

Mr. Clark, of Missouri. Have you any way of keeping them from eating the cherries?

Mr. Lacey. No one should ever begrudge a cherry to a woodpecker or a robin. He has made the cherry possible before he takes it. He has done more toward its fruition than the man who set out the tree, because he has protected it from the pests that destroy it.

Life is real, life is earnest
From the start until the end;
And with the demise of a doctor
The undertaker plants a friend.

--Chicago News.

PARKS FOR FOREST PRESERVATION.

CHARLES CHRISTADORO.

Had the buffalo remained with us to-day in appreciable, though fast diminishing numbers, unquestionably we would now have a Society for the Preservation of the Buffalo. The rapid extermination of the game birds throughout the country has stimulated hundreds of game protective societies leading to much beneficial legislation on the subject. The preservation of song birds has been generally taken up and the discouragement of the use of feathers as decorations for women's hats has resulted in destroying to a degree the market of the plume hunter.

The preservation of fish has been a study for years, and the line is pretty closely drawn in the Adirondack woods to-day between the question of whether paper making with the consequent polluting of the streams from the factories is more important than fish preservation. The great Sequoias of California, unmatched timber giants, are threatened by the lumbermen's axe and saw, and a society is being formed for their preservation. But recently the Pinchot family of Washington donated \$150,000 to establish a Chair of Forestry at Yale College; more work in the line of preserving and perpetuating our fast disappearing forests.

The pine forests of the great Northwest have been looked on for years as inexhaustible, as was the buffalo when the latter dotted the plains in countless thousands. Forty years ago the man who had the temerity to raise his voice in favor of preserving the buffalo from extermination was laughed to scorn. The animals were almost as plentiful as the sands of the desert that they roamed, and to exterminate them was seemingly beyond the power of man. But the railroads came, and in their wake the skin hunter, with his repeating rifle, and in time the bone hunter finished the job as he piled the prairies high with mountains of glistening bones to be shipped East, calcined, and used for purifying the sugar we eat.

So was it with the forests. The towering groves of black walnut in the Middle States first left the exterminating hand, until a black walnut grove has become only a memory. The magnificent bodies of soft white pine, that queen of all woods, in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota, attracted the lumberman. To listen to an old-time logger describe the wastefulness of the early timbering days would be sufficient to satisfy one that the pine was then looked upon as inexhaustible. But under the blows of millions of axes the trees be-

gan to disappear, forest fires helping on the work of destruction. Thirty years ago far-seeing men stopped to figure, and argued that the lumberman and settler combined would wipe out the pine forests in 10 years. Year after year was this prophecy made, for 30 years back, until the cry of "wolf" is beginning to come true. Michigan is actually cut over. The great State of Wisconsin, that has sent billions of feet of merchantable pine and other woods to the markets, is nearing the end of its standing timber.

In the old logging days only timber adjacent to the streams which were within reasonable hauling distance by oxen was cut. Now they construct logging railroads, cut the timber winter and summer, and haul the logs in train loads to the mills.

Minnesota may be said to have more standing white pine timber within her boundaries than any other State, yet it is only too rapidly disappearing. There are those who speak of a 5 year limit now, instead of the former 10 year estimate. One of the surest signs of the coming of the end is the fact that the heavy operators in pine are looking to the spruce and fir forests of the Pacific Coast, and have recently invested millions of dollars in coast lumber lands.

In the Northern part of Minnesota, midway of a straight line drawn from Duluth to Crookston, is what is known as the Chippewa Indian reservation. On this land is to be found the greatest body of virgin pine in the State of Minnesota. Here are the 3 great lakes, Leech, with 540 miles of shore line, Cass, and Winnebagoishish. Through this tract the infant Mississippi, fresh from Lake Itasca, meanders, connecting these 3 great bodies of water with 70 smaller lakes. The woods teem with deer and moose, as did the forest stretches of New Yrk 200 years ago. The lakes and streams abound in voracious muskalonge, wily bass of gigantic size, and toothsome wall-eyed pike. To fish in these waters is to spoil one's self for like fishing in any other section. There is a constant temptation to over fish, and load the boat with more than one needs to catch.

The scenery on these forest-encircled lakes is second to none in this country. The wildest and most scenic tracts in Maine do not compare with it. The interweaving streams and ever changing scenery make this an ideal country for the man or woman who loves nature in her primeval state. The soil of this reserva-

FROM THE GAME FIELDS.

TO SAVE THE GAME IN THE PARK.

New York, Jan. 19th, 1900.
Hon. E. A. Hitchcock,
Secretary of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:—I beg to call your attention to the urgent need of killing off a large number of the bears, lynx, mountain lions and wolves in the Yellowstone National Park. It is a well known fact that these animals have become so numerous there that they destroy large numbers of the elk calves and of cows which become too weak during winter to be able to escape. These carnivorous animals also kill, every spring, several buffalo calves, and more or less young deer, antelope and mountain sheep.

It would be an easy matter to reduce the numbers of these predatory animals, by simply instructing the park superintendent to detail a few good hunters from his command to do the work.

In my judgment this should be ordered at once. The bears are now hibernating, and will begin to come out of their dens early in April. The snow will still be deep in the park at that time, and it will be easy for the bears to overtake and pull down the young animals and the weakened mothers. Hunters traveling on snow shoes could easily pursue and rapidly thin out the bears. Captain Brown, the present superintendent of the park, is a practical big game hunter himself, and could direct this work intelligently and effectively. As you are well aware, the buffalo herd in the park has dwindled from about 400 head, 3 years ago, to less than 30 head now, and the last one of these will disappear within 2 years more unless stringent measures are adopted for their preservation. It would be a national calamity to have this remnant of the American bison exterminated. Of course many of these animals have been killed by poachers outside of the park and perhaps a few inside, but it is a well known fact that many of the buffaloes have been pulled down and killed by the beasts of prey which I have mentioned.

Hoping you may give this matter your careful and prompt attention, I am,

Yours truly,
G. O. Shields, Prest. L. A. S.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C., March 16, 1900.
Mr. G. O. Shields, President,
League of American Sportsmen.

Sir:
Your letter of January 19th has been received, in which you call attention to the

urgent necessity for killing off a large number of bears, lynx, mountain lions and wolves in Yellowstone National Park.

In response thereto I have to state that the Acting Superintendent of the Park, to whom your letter was referred, states that:

There are, as stated by Mr. Shields, numbers of bears and mountain lions and large numbers of coyotes in the park, and much game in the way of elk, deer and antelope is killed by them. I have carefully investigated the matter as to whether buffalo are ever killed by the bears; the scouts who have been here, some of them for years, have never known of this being done, though of course it may have happened. With the exception of the buffalo and possibly mountain sheep, I think all kinds of game have increased of late years, though this may not be correct as to antelope. I think most of the destruction is due to the coyotes, and the scouts and enlisted men of the command are authorized to shoot them wherever found; a number of them near the post have been shot and poisoned this season. A few mountain lions have also been killed.

The depredations of the bears seem to be mainly about the hotels, where they often break into outhouses in search of food. I doubt the advisability of killing any of these animals except such as become so bad about the hotels as to make it absolutely necessary.

The mountain lions killed have been those in the vicinity of where the few remaining mountain sheep are ranging and with a view to the protection of these rare animals.

There are so many elk in the park that, for the present at least, no measures are necessary for their protection from other wild animals.

As Mr. Shields suggests, the important thing is to protect the buffalo, and I shall use every effort to this end; but it is no easy matter to cover the country where they are during the spring season; in fact, it is impossible except by the most experienced men with skis, who have to carry their rations and sufficient clothing for protection against cold at night on their backs. I have at present a detachment in the buffalo country, on skis, with instructions to find out as nearly as possible the number still left in the park; this trip will take at least 2 weeks and probably more.

From this report it will be seen that Captain Oscar J. Brown, Acting Superintendent of the Park, is taking such steps as in his judgment the circumstances warrant toward protecting the game in the reservation.

In this connection, it is proper to add that a number of bear and other animals have been trapped in the park and shipped to the Zoological Park in this city, and the same course will be pursued as to furnishing animals for the Zoological Gardens in Omaha, Nebraska.

Very respectfully,
E. A. Hitchcock,
Secretary.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Biological Survey,
Washington, D. C.,
January 26th, 1900.

Hon. E. A. Hitchcock,
Secretary of the Interior.
Sir:—

Will you kindly have sent to my address copies of the annual report of the superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park for the years 1890-99 inclusive?

I am informed that you have been requested to authorize the killing of "a large number of bears, lynx, mountain lions and wolves in the Yellowstone National Park." This, it seems to me, would be a serious mistake. There is, of course, no danger in killing all the wolves that it is practicable to destroy, if the persons authorized to do the killing can be made to confine their attention to these animals, which are notoriously destructive to big game. But in the case of the other species mentioned, namely the bears, lynx and mountain lions, it would be exceedingly difficult, I think, to obtain trustworthy evidence to the effect that these animals really cut any figure in the destruction of big game in the Park. The mountain lion, or panther, is well known to feed largely on deer, and sometimes doubtless kills an elk, particularly the young. But deer and elk exist in the park in such vast numbers that the inroads made on them by the few mountain lions inhabiting the region are too insignificant to merit attention.

Black bears are very abundant in the park, as you know, and may be so much of a nuisance that it is desirable to reduce their numbers. But this should not be done under the pretext that they are a menace to the game.

The case of the grizzly bear is very different. The Yellowstone National Park is now the only place in the world where a person may go with the assurance of seeing a live grizzly, and, if I am correctly informed, the number of grizzlies there is by no means large. The grizzly is one of the distinctive American mammals rapidly

approaching extinction, and it has been already exterminated over fully nine-tenths of its range. It would be a calamity, therefore, for the United States Government to in any way hasten the extinction of the species.

I have the honor to remain,
Respectfully,
C. Hart Merriam,
Chief, Biological Survey.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, D. C.,
February 2d, 1900.

Respectfully referred to the Acting Superintendent of the Yellowstone National Park for consideration in connection with the reference on the same subject forwarded to him under date of January 20th, 1900. This paper should be returned to the Department.

(Signed) E. A. Hitchcock,
Secretary.
E. M. D.

(2d Endorsement.)

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT,
YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK,

Mammoth Hot Springs, Wyo.,
February 9th, 1900.

Respectfully returned to the Honorable the Secretary of the Interior.

The destruction of game is confined mainly to deer, elk, antelope and sheep, and these depredations are mostly the work of coyotes. The mountain lions, of which there are still large numbers in the park, do much damage, and if this was only among the deer and elk it would amount to little, as the elk undoubtedly are increasing and the deer, if not increasing, are not diminishing; but it is known that these lions kill mountain sheep, an animal which is becoming rare and which must be protected to prevent complete extinction. To do this requires that the mountain lions in the vicinity of where these sheep range should be kept down as much as possible. There is a small band of mountain sheep on Mount Everts, within 3 miles of this post, numbering about 26, and another band about 12 miles North-east from the post, near Hellroaring creek. It is not known if there are any others in the park.

In these 2 localities there are many mountain lions. It was found necessary, both last winter and this, to shoot these lions whenever found, to save the sheep. There is no danger of their being exterminated, as they range throughout the park and are extremely difficult to find. Coyotes are numerous and are killed at every opportunity. No indiscriminate killing of these or any other animals is allowed; the destruction is confined to coyotes and mountain lions and is done by the