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ALASKA'S SLAUGHTER OF AMERICAN EAGLES---18,000 SHOT FOR 50c BOUNTY

One Hundred And Fifty Tons Fell Before Hunters Between 1917 And 1923---Enough To Carpet A Trail Over Thirty-Three Miles Long.

Eighteen thousand American Eagles shot down at the price of fifty cents an eagle. About 150 tons of eagles fell before Alaskan hunters, between the years 1917 to 1923, since a bounty was offered by the Territorial Legislature of Alaska, in an effort to blot out the American eagle; or enough killed to "carpet a trail over thirty-three miles long, if the wings were spread out and the tips touching." An appeal is made by William L. and Irene Findley to the American public to save the lives, of some at least, of these eagles, so that it will not fall to our children to know that symbol of freedom only in a commercial way, by his imprint on the American dollar.

We read that probably more eagles were killed than counted and the bounty not collected, so approximately 25,000 eagles have been killed since the campaign began. What are the reasons for this slaughter, and are these reasons justified?

Why this determined effort to blot the emblem of our country out of existence? A citizen of Juneau writes the following explanation to Mr. T. Gilbert Pearson, President of the National Association of Audobon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals:

"So far as I have been able to ascertain, no information or statistics were presented to the legislature as a basis for the passage of the bill, the basis for its enactment being upon statements by observers that, in their belief, the depredations of the birds were seriously affecting the salmon supply by destroying the fish while engaged in spawning in the small streams, that they also killed a great many fawns of deer, and young forest and shore birds, as well as ducks, geese, and other birds."

"The legislature that passed this law," says Mr. Pearson, "is not controlled by wild Indians and ignorant Eskimos, but by men who should know better than to condemn any form of wild life merely on rumors and loose statements of prejudiced observers, and without some scientific investigation."

The Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture, after careful study of the economic relation of the American, or bald, eagle, in Bulletin Number 27, sums up the matter as follows:

"All things considered, the bald eagle is rather more beneficial than otherwise, since much of its food is of little or no direct economic value, while the good it does more than compensates for its obnoxious deeds."

In Alaska where fish are abundant, at certain seasons of the year, the bald eagle undoubtedly lives largely on salmon, but it is a well-known fact in the life history of the salmon that it dies after spawning. The banks of streams are at times lined with the bodies of spawned-out fish which are carried away and eaten by these big birds of prey.

With this recorded slaughter of 18,000 eagles, Alaskans may be sure there are not enough left to affect their supply of fish and game. The war on eagles should be discontinued before the last emblem of the American people is laid low. Is the American eagle to be exterminated without thought of investigation? Is it to be weighed in the scales of commercialism alone? Is there not a strong sentiment in the minds of the American people for this bird? Eighteen thousand American eagles shot down at the price of fifty cents each!

What was in the minds of our forefathers 140 years ago when they selected this bird as our national emblem? Was it not that this white-headed bird represented our liberty and independence?

Of the millions of people who daily see our national emblem on the coins and arms of our country, it is safe to say that a very large proportion have never seen an American eagle in the sky. It is a sight to fill a soul with wonder. He is a bird naturally shy and wary, clean and handsome, swift in flight and strong in body. He is as formidable as any creature of the wild outdoors, more than a match for any animal of his size. Not a beast of the field or a fowl of the air can drive him out. He stands firm before every earthly power except the hand of man. He is our symbol of courage, our emblem of freedom.

Every summer an increasing number of tourists have cruised the Alaskan coast, marveled at the rugged mountains, the slow-moving rivers of glacial ice, the stately forests and the wave-shattered rocky shoreline with its picturesque aeries of the American, or bald, eagle. And not the least impressive sight was the venerable white-headed, wide-winged bird that sails and circles the highways of the clouds. Now the big aeries of the eagle, situated like ancient castles at high points along the coast, are falling to pieces. No longer do these wild birds, living emblems of American liberty, float above the forests, streams and shoreline.

What sport the gunners of Alaska have had for six years! One hunter tells the following story: "It was a great shot at an old eagle perched on the top of a tall spruce. I took a fine bead and pressed the trigger. He launched in the air and started to sail away, but toppled over and dropped with a thud. As I came up, the blood was dripping from his beak. The instant he saw me, he threw himself on his back. His talons stretched up defiantly. He struck at me, quivered, and the film of death closed over his eyes."

How like an eagle! His is the strength and courage that yields not even at the point of death. He is an untamed spirit that can never be subdued. Shame on the hunter who aims at an eagle for sport—and fifty cents! I would as soon kill my dog for the purpose of selling his hide to a tannery.

The slaughter of the American eagle in Alaska is typical of the thoughtlessness that comes with the settlement of a new country. "Alaska for Alaska' 'has been the cry of these northern people, who are anxious to see the natural resources exploited with the haste of presentday commercialism. There is a feeling in Alaska that the throat of industry has been throttled by Government bureaus.

Even the rivers of Alaska can not be priced in terms of canned salmon alone. What if the eagles of Alaska do diminish the salmon crop by a few cases? Can the salmon-canners blame the eagles for the declining output of salmon? The late President Harding, and Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, were recently compelled to take legal steps against the commercial fishermen of Alaska. For years these fishermen have killed spawning salmon that were needed for brood stock, and they were rapidly running a great industry toward the brink of destruction. No wonder the salmon-canners wish to blame the eagle.

The whole point at issue is, the American eagle has without thought been exterminated in many parts of the United States. As a symbol of liberty, should he not live with the Stars and Stripes? As a living personality, should he be treated as a traitor with a reward of fifty cents on his head? In the wide extent of our country every child of the public school is taught what the flag of our fathers means. Would that the children of this land knew about the eagle that flies above the flag! If the slaughter is kept up, your children and mine may never have a chance to see a living eagle. He is approaching the point of final disappearence. Are the American people to be represented by a defunct species? Did our forefathers make a mistake? Is this bird not worthy of our love and protection? If not, why not take his image from the arms and coins of our country and pull him down from the exalted place above the Stars and Stripes? Who is to take his place in our national scheme of things?

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DEER "BLEATS" AND COUGARS.

Captain Randolph B. Marcy, who spent several years beginning with 1849 in exploring the country along the Canadian River of the Arkansas, and the heads of the Brazos, Trinity and Colorado rivers, of Texas, tell of his surprise one day when John Bushman, his interpreter, used a "deer-bleat," and not only called a doe to him but a fawn at the heels of the mother; and behind these a huge panther. Jonn bagged the panther instead of the doe.

The "bleat," believed to have been originated by the Delaware Indians, resembles somewhat the first joint of a clarionet, the brass reed being scraped very thin and nicely adjusted until it reproduces almost exactly the cry of the fawn. They were used during June and July before the does weaned their young. The "bleat" can be heard for half a mile, and was used near clumps of trees, or brush, where a doe might be lying. As the doe leaves her young after suckling it, and goes aside and makes her bed alone, she assumes her offspring is in danger and hastens to its defense. (Scarcely a sportsmanlike way of securing game unless one be starving).

But the hunter using the "bleat" did not always have it all his own way ,and he, like the little mother, sometimes ran a grave risk. For as the cry more precisely imitates that of the fawn the more likely is the panther, wolf or bear to be deceived and rush in to secure a tender feast. The Indians always attributed the survival of deer in a carnivorous country to the absence of any scene left by a fawn until it is old enough to outrun its enemies. When full grown it will leave a scent much stronger than that of almost any other animal.

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