

Columnist's Last Fling At Pheasant Controversy

It is not my intention to change this column into a controversy on the pros and cons of the current pheasant program. However I am having a last shot at attempting to get our sights set on the pheasant situation as applied to our own province of P.E.I. Some of 'Duck's' comments with respect to B.C.'s decision to abandon a restocking program that had been in force for sixty years borders on the ridiculous. Wisconsin also arrived at the same conclusion... a waste of time and money and decided to devote their efforts toward improving habitat... benefit of their wild stock. Duck may blow a fuse at this comment but it is this columnist's belief that before three years have passed Alberta will have joined up with British Columbia, Wisconsin and other States and organizations who have a sufficient stock of wild birds to work with.

Duck's comments on the Alberta situation are correct up to a point. It wasn't a silver thaw that decimated the pheasants in the Brooks area of Alberta. It was terrific blizzard, the worst in the memory of may Albertans. I talked to Alberta game officials about what happened. The pheasants were literally blown out of the table flat area around Brooks and eastward. I have been over it. It's so large the province of P.E.I. would pass as an over sized Ranch in comparison. Few pheasants survived in the Brooks irrigation district and those that did crouched in the lee of farm buildings until the blow was over.

The officials explained that the situation wasn't as bad as some pictured. Photographs were shown of pheasant tails protruding from snow drifts but they also pointed out that in sheltered tree covered bluffs and coulees along the Bow River and elsewhere a fair percentage of birds survived to move in and re-populate the Brooks area. True approximately 40,000 eggs were purchased in California and incubator hatched but this has developed into a controversy in Alberta. Many contend that the eggs purchased in California had little or nothing to do with the Alberta pheasant comeback... it was the native wild stock that won their way back and that the thousands of dollars spent on eggs and hatching facilities was frittered away on a gesture.

HOME FRONT Now we'll get back to the home front... it's P.E.I. we're interested in. Introducing pheasants to any place to which they were not native is a long, uphill climb. We started in 1916 and it was 31 years later in 1947 before we had an open season. It wasn't as simple as releasing hundreds or thousands of birds and sitting back and watching them multiply. There is a process of adjustment that requires years to take place. Alberta found that out too. It took long years of disappointing set-backs before they achieved their goal. I happen to know what I am talking about for I have several brothers in Calgary who are ardent hunters and who kept me posted on developments. Inspector Scott, who came to 'L' Division from Calgary, related to me, how disappointed the sponsors of this move were. They'd watch the birds rise to a peak that promised an open season in a year or two only to see them take a severe reverse. Suddenly they took hold to stay like they did in this province.

"Duck" claims two releases of mature pheasants totalling approximately 750 in 1946 and the spring of 1947 put the birds over the top. We had thousands of pheasants in Queens County at the time but this is beside the point... the season was opened allowing 3 Cack birds in the year 1957. There were no further releases of pheasants until 1956... 9 years later. What happened in the 9 years? The birds kept doubling in numbers until in 1953 an open season was allowed on hens with the bag limit 5 pheasants per day of either sex. That year (1953) according to a Game Census returns tabulation on a percentage basis of 5,000 hunters in Queens County the pheasant kill in Queens County alone was estimated at 15,000 Queens County was literally crawling with pheasants... a party of three hunters bagged 160 between them. Another country had of my acquaintance shot 23 and could have bagged a hundred if he hadn't so many misses in his system. There have been different versions as to the reason a season was allowed on hen birds. I was one of the sponsors of that move. It wasn't because the cock birds were driving out the ruffed grouse but that hens were increasing out of all proportion to the Cocks and barren hens were interfering with the nesting of the younger birds.

AT THEIR PEAK Our pheasants were at their peak in the fall of 1955. There were 8 coveys within a half mile radius of the Old Home farm. They wintered over in lots of the cock birds were crowing in the spring of 1956 around the old homestead. There were no recessions in numbers or any inkling that such was in store. And yet at this time 'Duck' and his adherents decided to attempt to improve on a one hundred per cent investment and released thousands of pheasants hatched from eggs laid from penned birds. They went ahead with this project despite expert advice from several sources warning against such a move. The result is now history. In September farmers reported that the pheasants moved from their sector as they had not heard or seen them for weeks. They moved into another land. Period.

IN 1957 the pheasants were in trouble. That spring the coverts

around the old home and the Klondyke Road were silent... no crowing cocks greeted the dawn. When birds or animals in the wild get into grave difficulties the survivors move back into remote areas and stay in compact groups... Nature's violent quarantine... until it's safe to spread out again. When Nature's cycle hits the rabbit population and cuts it down by an approximate 98 or 99 per cent cut one may travel for miles without seeing sign of a rabbit and then come upon an out-of-the-way swamp with twenty or thirty in it. It wasn't a cycle hit the pheasants as cycles do not strike in a fuse at this comment but it is this columnist's belief that before three years have passed Alberta will have joined up with British Columbia, Wisconsin and other States and organizations who have a sufficient stock of wild birds to work with.

POCKETS OF PHEASANTS I mentioned knowing of 10 'pockets' of pheasants in the fall of 1957... the bulk of them across the river... but contrary to 'Duck's' inference I didn't gun them. I do not betray a farmer's confidence but in any event I wasn't in the mood to hunt pheasants in 1957. This spring (1958) the pheasant outlook is brighter. At least three cocks are crowing within a half mile radius of the old home stead and Crown Point, once the home of pheasants that was barren in 1957, now sports a Cack and 4 hens. A farmer at Alexandra told me this spring that he often counted as many as 22 pheasants along the edge of Lloyd Carver's woods when returning from his back-farm work but never heard or saw a pheasant there all through 1957. They are back this spring.

Now here is an interesting point: "Duck" and his associates had big things planned for 1957 and figured on releasing at least 1,000 full grown pheasants in the fall of 1957. Alas, disease broke out and hundreds of birds were ordered gassed. Their entire stock was destroyed including the parent birds. Imagine the avil chorus at the moment if their project hadn't struck a snag when this spring the pheasants re-appeared in their old haunts... look how we brought them back.

The only pheasants released in 1957 were approximately 30 hens kept for breeders that turned into cocks. Some of our self styled pheasant experts cannot tell a cock from a hen until it grows a set of spurs. You want to Spur up boys. Now don't get me wrong I am not inferring that Duck can't tell a cock from a hen until it grows spurs. He can, but I can't say as much for some of his adherents. I place them in the same category as a retired, maiden lady, who wanted a hobby and decided to go into the poultry business. She had read

Back Stretch

(Continued from page 8)

14, 21, 26, 28, August 2, 4, 9, Old Home Week from the 11th to the 16th, inclusive, and August 18, 23, 25 and 30, September 1, 6, 8, 13, 15, 20, 22 and 27. Summerside: July 1, 16, 18 or 19 (Lobster Carnival Meet). Have just received a letter from Vern Oatway, a former Islander well known in this city who is now doing a large contracting business in Montreal. He says: "Just a line with enclosed Blue Bonnets Raceway program for May 5. Ramsay MacDonald has moved in and had two wins last night, and Ted Genesee has had two wins and a second up to today. He goes again tonight, but is being put in a faster class. He looks mighty good this spring."

"The Smith brothers from Mt. Stewart are stabled here with the Earl Rowe horses, and are doing O. K. The older brother does most of the driving. The crowds are very large for the year, and Sunday they bet over \$300,000. Some few years ago, \$20,000 was a terrific handle."

Thanks, Vern, for so kindly remembering us, and we hope you will pay a visit to your Island home this summer. Saint John horsemen are determined that they are going to have some of the best and fastest horses in the Maritime racing over their track this year, and to do this, they have added a lot of new speed in the last few weeks. Here are a few of them:

Bold Venture, p. 205 4-5, winner of \$16,220 and a 2.14 Class pacer; he won at Wilmington

about a cock crowing in the midst of his four and twenty hens and decided upon that ratio. Something evidently was amiss for she only got one egg a day. She called in a poultry expert and he found her trouble... she had 24 roosters and one hen. Now I don't pound a typewriter just to hear the keys rattle. I feel that the exponents of this pheasant program have not used common sense in the distribution of the release. With West Prince crying for pheasants to stock a pheasantless country they set down hundreds of birds in Queens county in places that already held a peak population. Here is a matter for Duck to ponder upon. In the spring of 1956, 160 hens pheasants were released in Prince County accompanied by the proper proportion of males. I have this from a member of the Game Association associated with their distribution. In the fall 1800 young birds were set down. The bulk of both plantings were made in Prince County west of Portage. How many pheasants are in Prince County this spring of 1958? My guess is less than 100. According to 'Duck's' figuring there should be several thousand. Who is right... time will tell.

Delaware on August 15 last year in 2.08. Major's King, p. 2.04, six years old, raced by Fred Mawhinney, Machias, Maine, last season ad won at Mount Vernon, New York, August 17 in 2.04. His winnings total \$12,393. He is a 2.15 pacer. Mighty Brewer, p. 2.01 3-5, eight years old and winner of \$54,802. Eligible to the 2.05 Class. Bradison, p. 2.08 1-5, was 8 times first, 6 times second, and 5 times third last year; his total winnings are \$5,255 and he is eligible to the 2.18 Pace. Sturdy Jimmy, p. 2.03, is eight years old and won at Vernon Downs last year in 2.06. He is eligible to the 2.14 Class. Aileen Blue, p. 6, 2.09. Won in Toronto on August 15 last year in 2.10. She is eligible to the 2.14 Class. Dixie K, p. 2.08. Eligible to the 2.22 class. Dr. Pence, p. 2.07, won at Maywood, Chicago, in 2.08 2-5 last year; eligible to the 2.20 pace; Roger Stone, p. 2.03 3-5, eligible to the 2.10 class and has total winnings of \$32,244.

And here is our pick—Success Vic, p. 2.07, was 12 times first, twice second and 4 times third last year. He is eligible to the 2.21 class. At Marietta, Ohio, on September 2 last year, he won the 2.21 class pace with 1-1 in a great battle with Scottish Light, who finished 2-2. Time 2.08 4-5 and 2.07 2-5 the fastest miles paced at that meeting. Scottish Light is at present very nicely settled at the Charlottetown track in the James MacGregor stable. True Captain, 2.06 1-5, is eligible to the 2.14 class and won at Livonia, Michigan, last year in 2.12 2-5. And finally there is Victory Counsel, 2.04 4-5, ten years old, winner of \$12,655 and eligible to the 2.15 pace. RECORD NUMBER Never in the history of racing in the Maritime provinces has there been so many horses in training. There are over 100 in Cape Breton. Applications for stalls at Sackville Downs run to more than 150. Truro will have its usual quota-between 60 and 70. Saint John will have over 100 and possibly 150. Fredericton, Moncton and Woodstock all expect to be filled up, and last, but by no means least, is Charlottetown, which may have applications running to over 150.

There will be quite a few changes this year; no visitors will be permitted in the stable area before or during the races,

only the owners, drivers and groomers of the horses. This will be carried out most strictly! Saliva and urine tests will be taken by full qualified veterinarians, under the supervision of the R.C.M.P. The pari-mutuel betting will be supervised by the Federal Department of Agriculture, through the R. C. M. P. This was not carried out by all Maritime tracks last year, but has been in effect for several years at Charlottetown.

In our recent letter from W. P. Edwards of Fredericton, in which he referred to the Roosevelt Raceway program for Saturday, April 29, we neglected to include the excellent performance of Bay State Pat, 2.02 4-5, in the sixth race, the "Happy Times" for a \$5,000 purse.

The field was a high-classed one, and Bay State Pat finished right at the winner's shoulder, time-2.03 2-5. The winner was Hundred Proof, 2.01 2-5, winner of over \$50,000. Easy Adios, 2.01 2-5, was third. Blue Field, 2.03 4-5, was fourth. H. A. Direct, 2.02 1-5, was fifth and three other starters. Bay State Pat is now owned by Jacques Beaudoin, Montreal, who bought him from Andrew Perry of Summerside. Our Halifax correspondent

writes that Cyril Smith, Hunter River, has taken over the race horses owned by Sam Walker, Halifax. They are: Eddie Hosier, 2.12 1-5; Mr. Rock, 2.08 1-5; and he has also added to his stable Price Tag, 2.05. Other members are: Barbara Ann Kildare Girl, 2.16 4-5; Pennsylvania, 2.14 2-5; Royal Value, 2.04 2-5; Rubie's First, 2.21 3-5; Nokomis Belle; Diana's Girl; Christie's Best and Spin'n Span.

Other stables that will be moving into Sackville Downs are the "Chops" Campbell stable; the Frankie Daniels stable, which will be divided between Sackville Downs and Truro; the Ed Haley stable; and the Letcher stable, in charge of Ike Moreside which will include Chevie G., 2.10, Flaming Way, 2.04 3-5, and Direct Mite, 2.06 3-5. And Mr. Letcher is away on a buying trip, expecting to bring in a couple more.

There are also other stables to come in, which will increase the horse population at Sackville Downs to between 150 and 200. Looks like the greatest season for racing since the opening of the track.

We had the pleasure of a visit from Ervin Fraser, 733 Broadway, Sydney, N. S., who is here

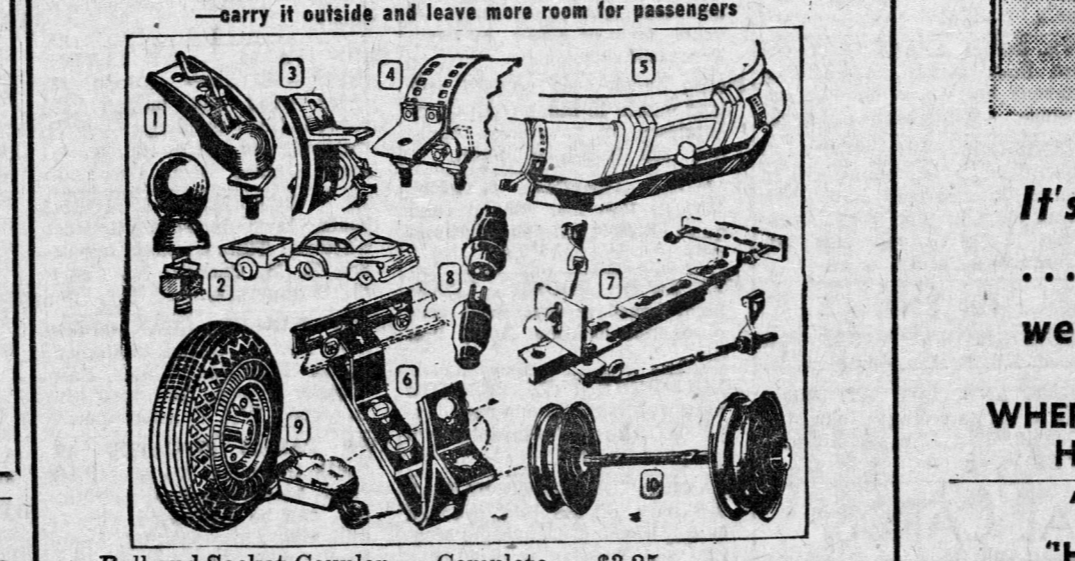
Cricket Results LONDON (Reuters)—Results of Friday's cricket matches: Cambridge University 180 and 96; Kent 162 and 115 for 1. Kent looking over a four-year-old trotter that he may take back with him to Sydney. Mr. Fraser loves horses and drives them himself, just for the fun of it, but he has had quite a bit of success. A few years ago he was in second place as he was declared and 183 for 8; Nottinghamshire 95 and 340. Middlesex won by 2 wickets. (Middlesex 12 points).

won by 9 wickets. Somerset 249 and 219 for 9 declared; Glamorgan 152 and 20 for 2. Match abandoned, rain (Somerset 4 points). Warwickshire 219 and 256 for 4 declared; Combined Services 154 and 223. Warwickshire won by 98 runs. Leicestershire 277 for 5 declared and 80 for 4 declared; Northamptonshire 128 and 118 for 2. Match abandoned, rain. Middlesex 253 for 8 declared and 183 for 8; Nottinghamshire 95 and 340. Middlesex won by 2 wickets. (Middlesex 12 points).

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