

HUNTERS' CORNER

Wildgeese Have Suffered In Late Spring Breakup

The heaviest spring flight of wildgeese over a long period of years is beginning to filter northward. Old timers tell me it has been a long, long time since they saw so many geese here in the spring. It's passing strange that on the toughest spring we have had for over a quarter century a record flight of geese should choose to arrive earlier than usual. In this columnist's memory I have to go back 31 years to find a spring its equal in ice and snow conditions. I commenced spring patrols in March, 1929 and this is the first spring since then I have not been on the rounds with the exception of a partial layoff in 1952 during my change of status from Federal to Provincial game warden.

Since the roads have opened up I have made trips throughout the countryside contacting old time observers and key undercover men who kept me pretty well informed as to feed and poaching conditions while I was on active duty. It is the general consensus of opinion that the geese suffered more from starvation and illegal shooting this spring than on any season within memory. I didn't realize that the geese were so hard pressed for food until I began to circulate among the farmers. There were practically no open water for weeks later their arrival and periodic snow storms shut off their food ordinarily gleaned from the fields — stubble and last season's potato acreages. For days they sat huddled together out on the sea waiting for rations to come up.

It was safe for them to hang out around the few open channels. From what I can gather in some districts the season was wide open — in others just the usual sniping tactics that have occurred every past spring and will in all probability continue in future seasons.

According to reliable information poachers had a field day in the Orwell — China Point — Earncliffe — and Portree Creek triangle. For a week or more after the geese arrived there was no open water except at Orwell (Loughran's) and Portree Creek. The distance between the two points is approximately three miles as the crow flies. When the geese were driven out of portree they flew across Orwell Cove to Brush Wharf and thence up the Orwell River to Loughran's.

Farmers who live at The Cove held it was pathetic. The geese would fly to Loughran's and in 10 or 15 minutes would again appear in sight scattered all over the skyline and honking their heads off. Toward the end their breasts were V shaped — like troughs as one farmer commented — and the birds were so weak they had to alight on the snowy fields between flights. One observer remarked: "I never in my life saw so many single geese flying hither and yon searching for last mates." There'll be a lot of broods missing from the return flight south this year.

OPEN POACHING
In case some readers of the Column will get the idea I'm jumping to conclusions I'll relate an incident that happened at Loughran's. After the geese came they frequented several open holes under Jimmie Hughes' shore. One

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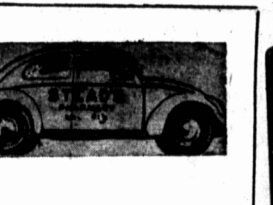
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Back Stretch
(Continued from Page 6)
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The Charlottetown track has been put in splendid condition by a lot of hard work. The man responsible for the oval and in fact the entire plant this year is Everett Hastings, and the Island were searched over a better man yesterday could not be found for the job. Yesterday over a dozen horses were working miles in 3:00 quite easily. There is nice footing and just enough clay to make training enjoyable for the horses and the real thing for legging them up. Some sixty horses are stabled there now but it is expected that when racing gets under way that number will be increased to 150. While no program

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