

replaces the lure of the gun. And the jumping off point is often against the museum. In this connection, the film library now so successfully started in your institution will doubtless prove a potent stimulus for this hobby also. I saw some of these films: they were excellent.

General education, that over-worked word, is perhaps the final and greatest function of a museum. In this respect, the general plan of yours is as sound as anything I have encountered. Accurate information, interestingly conveyed, is doubtless the essence of a museum: yours has it.

A museum is only half a museum if it fails to cater also to the beautiful, the aesthetic. The paintings embellishing the walls and cases, part and parcel of modern showmanship, surpass many that I can recall in some of the world's more celebrated museums. They are an inspiration in themselves. They add that final touch that gives a museum its "soul."

A museum cannot create a good director: it is the director, and his staff, that create the museum. In Mr. Fred Bard and his associates you have the dynamo which is putting yours on the map. If I may make a suggestion--I hope it won't be considered an impertinence--it is that you give them fresh air to breathe and the space to fulfill the promise they have shown to provide Saskatchewan with a notable and invaluable provincial institution.

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BEAVERS AT WAUCHOPE

Marion Nixon

There has been a marked increase in beaver population throughout this district during the past three years. The main lodge we know of is situated about 3 1/2 miles northeast of our house, and is well posted. It is now quite a local tourist attraction, as the lodge is so large in comparison with the ubiquitous muskrat house; and the amount of wood being cut and hauled is amazing. I have been to look at it once, in early evening, and our presence was repeatedly reported by the scout, smacking his tail on the water several times. Then he would dive, come up a few yards farther away, swim around for a few moments, smack out his beaver morse code again, and submerge.

Their site is on the north side of a long slough with fairly steep sloping banks. My husband says that all through the dry years it was a hay meadow, and was cut out year after year, right to the middle. It was then like a long "draw." But now that it has been filled with our past rainy seasons, and dammed by the beaver, horses have been seen to swim, crossing it.

The neighbor who lives nearest to it has counted 15 beaver adults and yearlings. This is the same number I was told were there last year also. Perhaps they consider this the capacity of that site, for now there are several new lodges being started within two or three miles of the big one. One of these is within 3/4 mile of our house, and they have dammed a runway between two sloughs, backing up the run-off so that water covers the road in one place where a high narrow grade separates the two sections of a deep slough. My husband noticed the beginning of a lodge east of this last fall, but no one saw any activity all winter, nor any footprints while the snow was here. There is another started on the Antler creek just south of Parkman; and my son's school pupils are enjoying watching the construction of another, now, in their pasture. The trimmings from the felled trees had been laid

carefully in a circle, stems pointing to the interior of the house-to-be, and they had started the first layer of plastering.

In another place by the original lodge, they have dammed (plugged) a culvert in a grade, and repeat this as often as the farmer unplugs it, and now have dug a ditch 3 ft. deep (so I am told) between the slough and another, and have carried that mud to the big house. No wonder the beaver's engineering acumen and its indefatigable industry is legend! I have written Mr. Paynter about them, as this road submersion becomes a problem.

In 1924 there was a beaver lodge on the Pond on the Antler creek, but there was not so much bluff in those years, and they soon exhausted supplies and moved on. Oncesince we have known of a lodge in much the same reach of the creek, but it was later abandoned also.

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DEER

K. M. Buceuk

I would like to report on the deer population around Kamsack. Last fall hunters were out in full force. Some of them had an aeroplane to "spot" the deer for them. I do not know whether this is against the law or not.

Towards spring our forest ranger noticed many deer starving at Madge Lake Provincial Park and began to enquire where the deer were located. He was very pleased to find that some had wintered on our farm. They were the only ones he had heard about. However, there must have been more because this spring we had four herds of them -- up to twenty-five -- feeding on the stubble every evening. It seems to me that poachers take a heavy toll of deer during the late winter.

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A COYOTE IN THE YARD

Mrs. John Hubbard,  
Grenfell.

We had a visit from a coyote on August 13. My husband looked out of the window about 6 o'clock and saw one between the house and the barn eyeing my hens, which had not been shut up. He circled around and didn't take a hen though they were within reach and much excited. He never worried about three cows in the yard and they eyed him but didn't get excited. By the time my husband got out with the rifle the coyote had decided to leave and although he was followed down the lane on the tractor he didn't appear again.

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A VISIT FROM A WEASEL

Mrs. O.L. Wolters,  
Tolland, Alberta.

During the later part of June I heard quite a commotion among the bird population in some bush near our house and hurried over expecting to see our old cat, but looking down at me and crouching very still along an inclined tree trunk was a weasel. He stayed there for a long time, just moving his head occasionally to look at some newcomer to his onlookers. Beside myself, his spectators were bluebirds, robins, orioles and a flicker.



COYOTE CAPERS

S.P. Jordon

The following eye witness account of coyote behaviour was told to me by a member of the United States federal department of agriculture:

"I once watched a pair of coyotes capture a gopher by a rather unique method. The coyotes lined up in single file and approached a gopher so that the wind blew their scent away from the gopher. As far as the gopher was concerned there was only one coyote approaching his hole. When the first coyote passed over the hole the gopher reappeared, his safety being assured by the faintness of the scent of the first coyote which had continued on, walking up-wind. The second coyote, having dropped to a crouch position immediately behind the first coyote when it passed over the hole, was able, with one quick lunge, to grasp the unsuspecting gopher."

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FIELD-MOUSE NEST

S.P. Jordon

On May 18 I discovered the nest of a field-mouse. It was composed entirely of chicken feathers and yet there wasn't a farm or a chicken for nearly a mile. What boundless energy must have gone into the construction of this warm and cosy abode!

WHITE-FOOTED MICE

W. Yanchinski

Have the members noticed the scarcity of the White-footed mice this year? I haven't noted a single individual, while working in the fields, although I did encounter several Jumping Mice.

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B O T A N Y

HIS ARTICIE WILL BE MISSED

In this issue readers will greatly miss the usual article on a plant family written by Mr. Arch C. Budd.

We are sorry to report that Mr. Budd has not been weel this summer. He took radium treatments in the clinic at Regina early in June and since then has been having a great deal of trouble with his right eye which had become affected.

On July 21 he wrote that he and his wife were leaving by train for Nova Scotia to attend his son's wedding. They did not expect to be back until mid-August. He expressed his regret at not being able to send his usual contribution but hoped to be able to prepare one for our next issue.

The BLUE JAY hopes that Mr. Budd has had a restful holiday and wish for him a speedy return to good health.

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To turn a world of beauty into a world of ugliness is a great crime.

...Howard Braucher.

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