

EDITOR'S DESK

In the first number of this Bulletin published in the fall of 1942, Mrs. I.M. Priestly wrote: "We present the first issue of the Blue Jay fully conscious of its many and probably glaring shortcomings. We know there is a quotation that "Fools rush in -----". Maybe it applies in our case, but anyway we should like to receive frank comments, criticism and suggestions, so we can make further issues of our bulletin of greater value to nature lovers of the province."

Those of us who have been constant readers of the BLUE JAY for the past six years know how well that work has been done and how accurately it has portrayed the keen interest of men and women throughout Saskatchewan in wild life and the pressing problems in relation to its conservation.

With this issue, the Saskatchewan Natural History Society makes its debut, and in carrying on the work wishes to reiterate the statement and the plea made by its first editor. We, too, invite suggestions and constructive criticism and most earnestly solicit contributions from our members and others in every section of the province. We have been greatly heartened already by the support given for this issue and by the host of kind letters wishing us success and offering future help.

Believing that the best conservation laws are not found in the pages of our statute books but in the hearts of nature lovers and true sportsmen, the policy of the BLUE JAY in respect to the protection of wild life will remain the same. The status of various predatory birds and other animals has often been discussed by members of this Society. Scientific investigations bring to light the fact that coyotes, timber wolves, weasels, hawks, crows, magpies and a host of other "pests" form important links in the chains which preserve the balance of nature. The majority of us like to see all of these animals in their natural setting and pray that no species will be exterminated because of selfish reasons on the part of a minority.

When robins raid and destroy our strawberry patch, we try to protect that patch but do not attempt to pass a death sentence on either the entire species or the friendly robin on our neighbor's lawn. When coyotes raid the sheep ranch and poultry yard, we believe it the owners duty to protect that ranch and chicken house -- and not advocate wholesale slaughter in areas where they might be doing more good than harm. We believe that offenders only should pay the penalty. We deal with humans, the greatest predators of all, that way and can well afford to pass on the same treatment to the rest of the animal kingdom.

John Ruskin has written: "God has given us the earth for our life. It is a great entail. It belongs as much to those who come after us as to us; and we have no right, by anything that we do, or neglect to do, to involve them in unnecessary penalties, or to deprive them of benefits which are theirs by right."

Lloyd T. Carmichael.