

OUR HABITAT

Arthur Ward, Swift Current

ON taking up residence on the homestead, there slowly unfolded to our gaze, "The little People" doing the duties assigned to them in the habitat here, congenial to their needs. Dame Nature reigned there in this reserve The Great Creator had established. We did not see the wolverine, the bear, the lynx and moose, simply because this habitat did not require their attention, nor could it fill their needs.

Some herds of antelope here and there grazed on the rich luxuriant grass which also provided cover essential for great quantities of mushrooms growing profusely in favoured spots. The little kit fox with its conspicuous brush, extremely shy, always taking care to provide itself with three exits from its shallow underground abode, succumbed to the wiles of man and with its yapping bark in the night, gradually disappeared.

There had been no one to dispute the hills the badger threw up, or the gopher's right to fill up its larder with roots and herbaceous tid bits—no kindergarten to teach them to stick to this diet and leave the farmers' grain alone. They therefore prospered with the help of coverage provided by the growing grain, thus enabling the coyote to increase by the same means by feeding upon the more plentiful supply of gophers, rabbits and mice, unaided by the now vanishing kit fox.

The booming of the prairie chicken, (now gone from our district) still lingers in our memory of those early morning symphonies, augmented by the prominent and plentiful chesnut coloured longspurs. They filled the air with song as they returned from aloft with wings high over back. They too decreased because of the plough and close cropped pastures and were gradually replaced by the lark bunting with its similar flight song.

We noticed circles in the grass, several feet in diameter, with the outer rim of extremely rich deep green, contrasting greatly with the inner and surrounding grass. The rim, mostly studded with mushrooms, suggested high qualities of pro-

duction. These occurring in varying distances drew many conjectures as to their origin. One solution offered was that the blood of a buffalo killed there had acted as a fertilizer—but why the almost perfect circle? This still had us wondering.

Small depressions occurring intermittently were generally conceded as buffalo wallows. Yet, having discovered the turf burning in spots during favourable circumstances after a prairie fire, led us to the belief that this may have contributed to the forming of these depressions.

The hand of man, was now becoming apparent in our otherwise well balanced habitat. The development of 2-4D and other potent weed killers poses a threat to bird life which may be even greater than caused by over use of insecticides. The planting of trees around farm buildings added greater impetus to sustaining newer species that would otherwise have proceeded north. This result greatly demonstrated the need of larger areas planted to trees to the extent of eighty acres, where not so provided by nature.

Hawking the heritage of our vast wildlife resources for the purpose of a scanty revenue has reached proportions unprecedented. The woodcock, wilson's snipe and coot are not idling around for the purpose of providing a target for the so-called sportsman, but rather they are Nature's policeman doing the duties assigned to them within their habitat.

Seeing the City Sights

Robert Spring, Regina

A porcupine visited Regina one early morning late this summer. It was peering through the window of a brightly lighted men's clothing store when first noticed by a constable. The police phoned the S.P. C.A. On arrival they threw a rug over the sixty pound animal and transported it to a more suitable natural habitat, not far from the city. Two hundred and sixty quills were later taken out of the car seat and rug.