

## “ K I N G ”

**T**HE MOOSE JAW Wild Animal Park has a small herd of elk. For many years the leader of this band was a stately bull elk who came to be known as “King.” He was a beautiful elk with a wonderful display of perfect antlers. Often he made a very noble picture by standing at the entrance of one of the various trails in the park with head erect. He watched the people drive by and many stopped and were able to obtain fine pictures of him. “King” finally died early in 1938 and his antlers are displayed in the Provincial Museum in Regina.

Mr. F. McRitchie of Moose Jaw tells us of one of the dangerous experiences of “King.” He was playing around in the snow when one of his huge antlers became entangled in a loose pile of barbed wire. Away he went trailing several hundred feet of wire. When the wire caught and held in a tree he went around and around the tree until he was like a fly in a spider’s web. He was very mad and pounded the ground with his feet and he did not look very inviting to approach. The largest and heaviest dray horse in Moose Jaw was brought out to the park and backed toward “King.” Although badly entangled the elk was still able to whip his body around with lightning speed and knock anything over. “King” practically lifted the back end of the horse off the ground. “King” was gradually crowded to a standstill then the wire was cut and cut until it came to the last snip that freed him. He raced like mad for about two or three hundred feet then wheeled around and stood with head erect, ready for battle. There never was a king with a prouder and more majestic bearing.

As admirers had sadly foreseen, the day eventually came when “King” was dethroned. In the fall of 1937 two young bull elk ganged up on him. “King” put up a terrible battle but the young elk fought in relays until “King” was completely worn out, battered and broken in spirit. He wandered off by himself to a lonely spot and there he stayed. He did not eat and would not accept anything that was provided for him. He became very thin; he was badly battle-



scarred and he no longer looked the “King” he had been.

Mr. J. L. Beattie of Moose Jaw completes the story of “King’s” life. Late that winter about 8 o’clock one morning “King” gave a couple of calls, a “bugle” as they term it. It is a wonderful sound and generally is heard only during the fall breeding season. An hour or so later he gave three calls. The two mature bull elk, who were probably three-quarters of a mile away came on the run. For a time they stood in a triangle, heads toward a common center, in a sort of conference but there was no display of anger. Shortly after this “King” lay down in a clump of bushes. The other two stood guard for perhaps two hours, then ambled off to the herd. When the caretaker went over, “King” was dead.

*(Ed. Note: We are glad to honor “King” and put this story of his life on record in the “Blue Jay.” Since twelve years have passed since the death of “King,” we would appreciate corrections or additions if any are necessary.)*