



## Our Provincial Emblems

by

ELIZABETH B. FLOCK, Regina



Nations have long honored particular flowers and birds with heartiness and devotion — Scotland, the thistle, the United States, the bald eagle. Over the years since the beginning of this century, each of the states and most of our province have chosen a flower and bird as emblems. Saskatchewan adopted the western red lily by an act of legislation in 1941. Later, the prairie sharp-tailed grouse was made our bird emblem in the same way.

About 1935 the Regina Natural History Society began seeking suggestions for a provincial flower and bird. Members were asked to give their ideas and reasons for each choice. My preference was for the western red lily and the mallard duck. Neither had been chosen by any other region. Both were showy and in need of protection. These were given the majority of votes by the society at one time. Other organizations were urged to express themselves in favor of these emblems or any of their own choosing. Finally, the prairie sharp-tailed grouse was given precedence over the mallard, principally because it remained here the year around.

There are many flowers and birds that might be even more typical of the province, but others had a prior claim to them and it seemed essential that we take those not in use elsewhere. For example, Manitoba had the pasque flower (crocus), Alberta, the wild rose, several states, the meadowlark, etc.

Now that we have our provincial emblems it is up to everyone to see that they are protected and given all the publicity possible. Birds and

flowers recognize no man-made boundaries so that we can not lay exclusive claim to ours, but they belong to us officially.

It will be interesting to learn the exact status of the grouse after the Yorkton Natural Society survey is completed. Mr. L. T. Carmichael collected much information on the lily from a survey taken some time ago. In certain areas it was increasing, while there was a definite decline in others. Many valuable suggestions were submitted for its protection.

As an instance of what has been accomplished elsewhere, we have had occasion to note Colorado's changing policy regarding its flower, the blue and white columbine. (The lark bunting is its bird emblem.) On our first visit there in 1914 Wild Flower Excursions took hundreds to various choice spots. The same old story was enacted of wanton picking until the arms could hold no more. Trains were decorated so that photographs could be taken to send home showing the abundance of flowers. In 1936, not having been there for ten years, it was with much satisfaction that we noted frequent signs along the roads, particularly in the Colorado Springs area, stating that it was illegal to pick columbine. On our last visit in July six years ago, we revelled in an unbelievable display of columbine growing in masses under the aspens along the highways. Everywhere we looked an amazing variety of wild flowers crowded each other for a foothold.

If only we could persuade people to adopt the slogan, "Love them and leave them," with regard to our provincial flower and bird!