

# BIG GAME OF ALASKA

## How Uncle Sam Will Protect It From The Railway Invasion. The Giant Moose of Kenai and How It Is Hunted—Caribou By The Thousand

By FRANK G. CARPENTER.

With the opening of the new government railway a horde of big game hunters will rush to Alaska. They will swarm over the Kenai peninsula, hunt the giant moose and the great brown bear. They will chase the caribou over the Tanana valley, and will climb the Alaska range to kill mountain sheep and goats. They will even make excursions to Mount McKinley, and some may go farther north to hunt the mighty walrus and polar bear.

The government is already preparing for the invasion. It has enacted stringent laws as to the open seasons for certain animals, and it has in view the creation of great game preserves, one of which is to surround Mount McKinley. As it is now, every non-resident of Alaska is required to pay from \$50 to \$100 to hunt in the territory, and without an additional payment, he cannot kill moose south of latitude 62. He has to have a special license for moose, and this costs \$150.

Moreover, the hunter is limited as to the number of animals he may kill, and even the residents cannot whip out the meat of the animals, or their heads as trophies, without a shipping license from the Governor of Alaska. It will cost him \$40 to export one moose, and he can send four deer, two caribou, two sheep, two goats and two brown bear for \$10. The law forbids hunting of game animals with dogs, or the use of shotgun larger than those of a number ten gauge.

The open season varies in different parts of the country. North of latitude 62 brown bear may be killed at any time, and moose, caribou, sheep and sea lions from August 1 to December 10. Walrus may be killed from May 10 to July 1, and grouse, ptarmigan and other birds from September 1 to March 1. It is unlawful for any person, in any one year, to kill more than two moose, one walrus or sea lion, three caribou, three mountain sheep, three brown bear, or eight deer; and he must not have in his possession on any one day more than twenty-five grouse or ptarmigan.

On the Kenai peninsula, the region that the railway will first open, it is now necessary to have a licensed guide, and it will cost from \$5 to \$10 a day for the time he is employed. The guides may be either white men or Indians; they are appointed by the Governor, and their names are published. They are subject to the Governor and to the game warden. The penalty for infringement of the hunting regulations is a fine of \$200, or imprisonment for not more than three months, or both.

During my trip across the Kenai peninsula I saw a number of men from the big cities of the United States engaged in hunting. The most of them were from the West, and they were enthusiastic as to the prospects. On my way over the peninsula I saw much wild game; and at several of the roadhouses I was served with what was called Alaska beef, but which tasted very like moose meat. It was, I doubt not, killed contrary to the law.

The stringent hunting regulations are necessary to the preservation of the game of Alaska, and already the government has had to suspend the killing of certain animals in certain territories from time to time. It is now prohibited to shoot moose in southeastern Alaska; and it was only lately that the restriction on caribou in the Kenai peninsula was abolished. This is so notwithstanding the caribou in certain parts of Alaska are almost as numerous as were the buffalo on our Western plains. It is estimated that there are still several millions of these animals on the barren lands of the far north. They live there in the summer and go southward in great herds for the winter. Two or three years ago a drove of 30,000 came within a mile of Dawson and fed there on the hills. Men went out to see them in automobiles and great numbers were killed. The animals did not seem to be afraid of a man, and even the automobiles did not create a stampede.

About forty-five miles from Fairbanks is a hill known as Porcupine Dome, where, as the hunters say, the caribou of that region come together to start south in companies. They move in droves of thousands and make their way to the headwaters of the rivers. They stay south during the winter, and along in February and March begin to struggle back in bands of 100 or so.

Caribou are still seen as far south as the Lynn canal, over a thousand miles from their summer home in the far north. In 1915 a drove of more than 10,000 passed south, crossing the Klondike valley about twenty-five miles from Dawson, and 600 were killed for the winter food supply of that city. The carcasses were dressed and left out in the air. They froze within a short time, and the natural cold-storage conditions were such that they were kept until used.

During my stay in Dawson I had a talk with Commissioner Black, the governor of the territory, who, like Nimrod, is a "mighty hunter." He described a caribou herd which he saw on a recent trip up the Sixty Mile river. He says that the narrow valley and high mountains on either side swarmed with the animals. At every hundred yards, for the ten miles where he passed over their tracks, there were trails a foot deep, and there were so many hoof-prints that he could not put his hat on the ground without covering some of them.

The great Mackenzie watershed, which is about half the size of the United States proper, teems with caribou, and there are vast numbers in the Yukon basin. Nearly every miner's cabin in Alaska has a pair of caribou antlers over its door, and the Indians sometimes kill the animals for the mere pleasure of slaughter. They bring the choice cuts of the meat into the markets for sale, often allowing the bulk of the carcass to go to waste. A few years ago the young were killed for their skins, and reindeer coats made of fawn skins were sold in great quantities. The antlers of the caribou are beautiful. They average twenty points and many are larger.

The chief food of the caribou is rein-

deer moss, of a greenish white color, which is scattered over the hills and mountains of Alaska. Their favorite feeding grounds are on the treeless and semi-treeless parts of the territory, including the tundras along the coast of the Arctic ocean, and down to the Pacific side of the Alaska peninsula. They scatter widely in summer and collect in herds in the fall. Each herd has its leader, and it is said that if the leader is killed the rest of the herd becomes panic stricken and stampedes back and forth until another animal takes the lead.

There is one large drove of these deer that collects almost every year along the watershed between the Yukon and Tanana rivers. The hunters from Forty Mile, Eagle and Circle and the other mining towns of that region rely upon it for a part of their meat supply.

I have seen a number of moose since I came to Alaska. I have watched them swimming in the Yukon flats as we passed through on the steambot, and have picked out several with my field glasses along the banks of the streams. The animals range over the timbered parts of the territory, and they are especially plentiful on the Kenai and Alaska peninsulas. They are not like the caribou, in that they feed in the open. Their favorite home is the mixed woods of spruce, poplar and birch along the river bottoms and on the sides of the hills. During the winter they feed on the willows and young alders, digging the bushes out of the snow.

The Kenai giant moose is the largest of the deer family. Antlers are offered for sale which measure six feet from tip to tip, and now and then one finds a pair that is more than six feet in width.

The moose are at their best during the rutting season. This is at the close of the summer, when they have grown fat on the rich vegetation. They are most easily caught when the mosquitoes are bad. This drives them into the rivers and lakes. In the winter they are chased by men upon snowshoes. The moose are so heavy that they sink in the snow to their bellies when they get out of the sheltered places, and at such times they make for a lake or a river, where they can travel over the ice from which the snow has been blown. Many of the cow moose have their calves with them, and it is not uncommon to find a baby moose, or calf, as a pet in the mining towns. The calves are born during May and June, and follow the cows until the following spring.

The most delicious meat of Alaska is that of the mountain sheep. It brings higher prices than any other game in the market; but it is difficult to get and the supply is never abundant. A hunter at Fairbanks told me that he once saw 600 sheep in one drove. He thought himself lucky in that he killed two before they got out of sight. These wild sheep are different from those of the Rocky mountains. They have a coat that is more like hair than wool. There is one kind that is pure white with horns of jet black.

This is the Dall sheep, so named after William H. Dall, the Alaskan explorer. These sheep are not numerous in the Kenai peninsula and in the Alaska range. There are some about Mount McKinley, and good hunting grounds will be reached by the railroad. There are also large numbers in the Endicott mountains, north of the Yukon, the animals feeding for the most part on the wild mountain tops far above the timber line. They move about over the hills, and you can see their trails going this way and that along the sides of the mountains.

Some attempts are now being made to domesticate the mountain sheep. The lambs are caught and reared in captivity. There is a farmer near Copper Center, about 100 miles from Valdez, who is trying to cross the sheep with some that he has imported from Montana and other cold parts of the states. He has been successful with some of his rams and has bred from about a half dozen mountain ewes. He expects to bring in about 2,000 sheep from the states, and establish a mountain sheep industry. The cross results in a tame, large-sized animal, with a fleece which is a combination of hair and wool. The wool is thick and close to the hide, the hair extending out beyond it. The meat is said to be superior to that of any other than the wild mountain sheep.

Bears are to be found almost everywhere in Alaska. No less than thirteen different varieties are recognized by the scientists. There are four general

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types, the brown, the grizzly, the black and the polar bear. The black and brown bears are the most numerous, and there are some of the brown bears so big that they weigh almost a ton. With the exception of the polar bear they are the biggest bears known. The largest of all are found on Kodiak Island, Yakutat, not far from Cordova. I have seen skins of these bears which were more than ten feet in length and six feet in width, with fur upon them three inches thick. I priced one in a store at Juneau and it was \$65. Here at Nome all furs are cheap. I have bought skins of two baby grizzlies for \$10 each, and have sent them home by parcel post. They weighed just under twenty pounds, and it costs me \$2.40 to have them landed in Washington. Polar bear skins of enormous size are sold here for \$80 and \$70, only a fraction of the price they would bring in the states.

As to the common black bear, there are so many of them about the mining camps that they often break into the

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"In the spring of 1903 I was attacked by muscular and inflammatory rheumatism. I suffered as only those who have it know, for over three years. I tried remedy after remedy, and doctor after doctor, but such relief as I received was only temporary. Finally, I found a remedy that cured me completely, and it has never returned. I have given it to a number who were terribly afflicted and even bedridden with rheumatism, and it effected a cure in every case. I want every sufferer from any form of rheumatic trouble to try this marvelous healing power. Don't send a cent; simply mail your name and address and I will send it free to try. After you have used it and it has proven itself to be that long-looked-for means of curing your rheumatism, you may send the price of it, one dollar, but, understand, I do not want your money unless you are perfectly satisfied to send it. Isn't that fair? Why suffer any longer when positive relief is thus offered you free? Don't delay. Write today. MARK H. JACKSON, No. 1402 Geneva Bldg., Syracuse, N. Y. Mr. Jackson is responsible. Above statement true.—Fch.

cabins when the owners are away. The cubs are frequently caught and tamed. Every camp and village along the Yukon has one or more which will eat out of your hand, and go through tricks upon order. Such animals are usually kept chained to a post, and not infrequently their home is a barrel or a hoghead nearby.

The polar bears of Alaska are found here in Bering sea and along the Arctic ocean. The hunter who wishes to kill such game should come to Nome in the spring and travel over the icefields northward and south with the ice-drift. They go as far south as the Seal Islands, and have been found as far north as latitude 79. Their food is chiefly seals and fish. The great bears lie down near the holes in the ice, where the seals come up to breathe, and grab them when their noses show on the surface.

The animals are perfectly at home in the water, and they have been seen swimming in the Arctic sixty miles from land or ice. I am told by the hunters that they usually run on the approach of a man, but that they will attack one when they are hungry. There is a story told here about an Eskimo at Point Barrow who got in the track of a bear which was running from a hunting party. The Eskimo, who was shooting ducks, sent a charge of shot into the bear. The bear turned back and knocked the Eskimo down with one of his paws. He then bit off the top of the man's head and resumed his flight.

There is only one animal in this region that can successfully fight the polar bear. This is the full grown walrus. The bears will attack the long sharp, ivory tusks of the grown-up. A full grown walrus has been seen on the body of a dead whale, keeping away a polar bear that was hungrily swimming around it.

There is no closed season on walrus, although the animals should be protected. They formerly came down to the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska peninsula, but the rookeries there have been destroyed, and they are now confined to the Arctic ocean and Bering sea. They are greatly despoiled by Eskimos who use the walrus hides for covering their large boats, paring the skin down for the purpose. They also eat the meat and sell the ivory tusks, sometimes getting \$1 a pound. They use the blubber for heating and lighting their igloos.

The Alaska walrus are enormous. The average one is as big as an ox, and it often weighs more than a ton. A wal-

rus was recently killed by some whalers near Point Barrow whose head weighed eighty pounds, and whose skin, including the flippers, 500 pounds. That animal had a girth of fourteen feet, and its weight was over 2,000 pounds. The skin was from one-half an inch to three inches in thickness, and the blubber weighed 500 pounds. The tusks of the walrus are a beautiful ivory. They extend directly downward from the upper jaw, and are sometimes almost two feet in length.

Among striking features of the game of this part of the world is the provision that nature has made for their protection. Some of the birds and animals change their color in winter, so that they cannot be seen against the white snow. The ptarmigan, for instance, which is one of the finest grouse of Alaska, has a summer plumage of mottled brown, while its winter coat is snow white. The same is true of the rabbits. They are gray in the summer and change to a snow white in the winter. The rabbits here are twice as large as those of our eastern States, although not so large as the arctic hare of the far north. They are sometimes called snow-shoe rabbits, because their feet take the place of snowshoes. They are large and soft, enabling the rabbits to go over the snow without sinking in.

Rabbits are so numerous that they form the food of many wild animals. They are eaten by wolves, dogs and bears, and even by the mink and lynx. The mink sucks the blood of the rabbit, leaving its flesh untouched, and he may kill a half dozen to get one square meal. The eagles and ravens prey upon the rabbits, and Indians hunt them in companies, driving them to a center and then shooting them. They are also caught with snares, or shot, to feed the flocks on the fox farms. I met one farmer who has killed twenty-seven hundred rabbits this year as food for his flocks.

Notwithstanding this, the animals multiply so rapidly that they would overrun the country were it not for a plague that periodically kills them by thousands. I have been told that this plague comes every seven years, and that it is usually followed by an increase in the moose and other wild game. When the rabbits are plentiful there are but few moose, and when rabbits are scarce the moose are abundant. This may be from the fact that the rabbits injure the pasturage over which the moose feed, in the same way that sheep will destroy it for other live stock. In the winter the rabbits live on the bark of the willows, eating it down as the snow melts. In this way they destroy great thickets girdling the trees.

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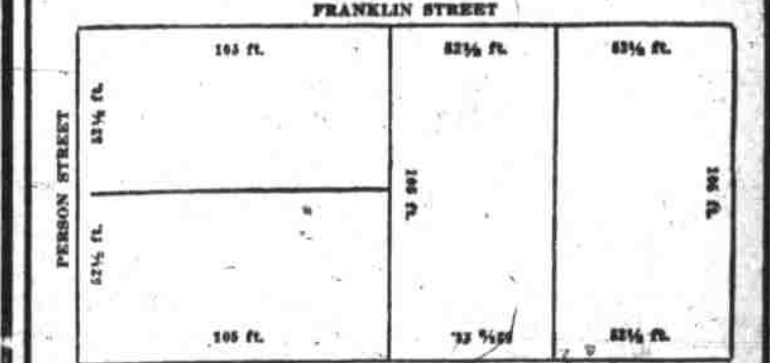
By virtue of authority conferred upon us in the will of Nora Cole, deceased, we will, on Thursday, March 1, 1917, at 12 o'clock m., offer for sale, at the Court House in this City, to the highest bidder, for cash, the following described property, known as the "Cole Estate." Beginning on Person Street, at Robert Clifton's line, running north with said street 105 feet, to Franklin Street; thence east with Franklin Street 210 feet, to the Vass property; thence south with the Vass property 105 feet to Clifton's line; thence west with Clifton's line 210 feet to the beginning.

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