

SELECTED ALASKA HUNTING AND FISHING TALES: VOLUME 2. *Anchorage, Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1972. 8 3/8 x 11 inches, 98 pages, illustrated. \$2.00.*

This is a selection of hunting and fishing tales from the monthly *Alaska*, formerly known as *The Alaska Sportsman*. The publication is the third collection of special Alaskan adventures; it contains 39 stories ranging in title from "Moose for a Lady" to "A Quarter of a Million Brant" and "Pickled Bait for Silver Dynamite".

The tales will no doubt appeal to the initiated, but to the non-motivated reader they may seem somewhat stereotyped and, perhaps, monotonous. Hunters follow the best guide in the country, "glass" the slopes to spot their quarry and the stalk is on. Gullies and ridges are perilously negotiated on all fours, loose rocks roll away, a .300 magnum is slid onto a shoulder, aim taken and a near-record ram is brought down — sometimes missed.

Possibly the book is more meaningful when considered in the light of today's growing opposition to hunting (somehow, fishing is not so much questioned); one gets an insight on the nature of the hunters themselves. The Editor has definitely sensed this and in his Introduction, he brushes a rather dramatic apology of the sport:

"Each year adventurers who challenge Alaska's wilds disappear . . . Most return from their adventures in Alaska's remoteness . . .

You'll find no accounts here of hunters harassing bewildered animals with small airplanes. There are no unfeeling stories of snagging of salmon. The men and women of these pages are sportsmen who regret the deaths of their trophies, at the same time exulting in the pride of accomplishment when they do manage to finally take the wary creatures they have sought.

The need for man to hunt and fish is becoming less understood by our increasingly city-oriented people. Too many, seeking a cause, decide that wild animals should not die at the hand of man . . . It is easy for such people to pretend that life goes on forever, and that no wild animal would ever die if it weren't for the hunter."

That approach may not win the cause. But the fact is that in North American countries where quality and values are unfortunately measured in terms of dollars, wildlife and nature cannot be successfully defended for their esthetic value only. Hunting is not detrimental to animal populations if a "surplus" or harvest is taken. But it does help place an economic value on wildlife, such as does the cropping and marketing of game in certain cases. These activities may assist in the preserving of wild animals and wild places, in our era. And what if some men and women still carry some traits of "Man the Hunter"; is that unethical?

Let's face it: the taking of animals by hunting and fishing, added to other values, may fend off the bulldozer and irreparable destruction.

Louis Lemieux

Published for the Arctic Institute of North America by McGill-Queen's University Press,
Montreal

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Indexed in the Canadian Periodical Index

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Printed in Canada