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NOT ALARMED AT SLAUGHTER OF HERD OF BISON.

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Washington, D. C.

Although a few years

ago slaughter of even a few bison would have been deemed a national calamity, the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture will make no definite effort to stop the proposed shooting of a considerable number of these animals on the privately owned Antelope Island in Great Salt Lake, announced in news dispatches.

While regretting the announced decision of the owner of the herd to turn the fine animals over to sportsmen at \$200 a head, Dr. E. W. Nelson, Chief of the Biological Survey, does not find it expedient to curtail other and more necessary game preservation measures by seeking a congressional appropriation to buy this herd at the owner's price. A bill to purchase the island and animals for \$300,000 was recently introduced by Congressman Welling of Utah.

"The dark day of the bison has passed," said Dr. Nelson, reverting to the time not many years ago when the principal remnant of the countless herds that once roamed this continent consisted of a pitiful group of less than 100 in Yellowstone National Park, where they were prey to poachers because of inefficient protective laws.

"As a matter of fact, with the present rate of increase, it may become

a problem in a few years how we shall care for the buffalo on the national preserves. It would be desirable for the Government to own the Antelope Island herd but there are other and more urgent uses for the money. I would much rather it were spent to buy additional range land north and south of Yellowstone Park for the sustenance of the elk which find insufficient winter feed within the grounds."

Statistics of the American Bison Society show that on January 1, 1920, there were 3,393 captive and wild buffalo in the United States, of which 1,032 were under the direct protection of the Federal Government. The rate at which the animals are "coming back" may be partially realized from the fact that the January 1, 1920, figures give 298 buffalo on the national bison range at Moise, Mont., while recent figures show 336. The nucleus of this herd was 40 buffalo in 1909. The leader is Kalispell Chief, a fine old veteran who has maintained the primacy of the herd through the years. This herd is under the protection of the Biological Survey as are also 61 animals at Wind Cave, S. Dak., 7 at Sully's Hill, N. Dak., and 28 at Niobrara, Nebr. Of the other buffalo under Government protection, the January, 1920, figures give 21 in the National Zoological Park at Washington, 6 on the Pisga Game Preserve, N. C., 3 on the Platt National Park, Okla., 119 on the Wichita National Forest, Okla., and 502 in Yellowstone National Park. There were 489 buffalo calves born in the United States in 1919.

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