

The English Sparrow Problem.

EDITORS OF 'THE AUK':—

Dear Sirs:— It is now 17 years since the U. S. Department of Agriculture issued an urgent appeal to the people to take effective action against the English Sparrow. I wish to find out what has been done and to obtain a fairly complete and unbiased expression of opinion from practically the whole United States and Canada. If the whole country is prepared to act in this matter, it is confidently believed that the species can be exterminated from the Continent, or from any considerable territory in which the necessary consensus of opinion exists. It is almost useless for one town or city to exterminate the sparrows, for they immediately swarm over from neighboring places; and the great fecundity of the species renders half-way measures a waste of time and effort. Several States have had bounty laws for the English sparrow and one—Michigan—has recently reënacted a bounty law. It seems clear from the enormous rate of increase and from past experience that the work must be undertaken on a higher plane than that of bounty getting, if any permanent progress is to be made.

Will you please insert the accompanying circular in your next issue, and, if possible, add a word of editorial comment.

Very truly yours,

A. H. ESTABROOK.

Circular of Inquiry with reference to the Present Status of the English Sparrow Problem in America.

1. Are you familiar with Bulletin No. 1, The English Sparrow in America, published by the Agricultural Department in 1889; and do you agree with the facts there presented and with its conclusions?

2. Is the English Sparrow present in your locality? How numerous? Are they increasing or decreasing in numbers?

3. What is being done to exterminate them? Please outline methods which you deem effective.

4. What influence have you observed the English Sparrow to have upon native birds?

5. Would public opinion in your locality favor the adoption of effective measures to exterminate this species?

6. Please state the facts and arguments, pro or con, which decide this problem in your own mind.

Everybody interested is requested to send in replies to the above questions before June 1, if possible, to the undersigned. It is proposed to gather a consensus of opinion from all parts of this Country and Canada. The data will be made public as soon as possible.

A. H. ESTABROOK,

Clark University, Worcester, Mass.

March 5, 1906.

(Newspapers please copy.)