

for other things of less importance. There is not the least particle of doubt but that were we to increase by two or three fold our outlay for education, and spend the money judiciously, no investment we could possibly make would bring larger returns, even in money, to say nothing about the higher things.

The consolidated schools of Indiana are costing more than those that are not consolidated, but they are doing more and the difference in cost is not great. If these schools were to drop their high school departments and other special features and attempt no more than the district schools are doing they could be carried on at a smaller cost than the latter, and the work they do, even in these narrower limits, would be infinitely superior. But they furnish the means of doing the larger work, and the people want it when it is within their reach. To the numerous class who tell us that these things are not possible here, the answer is that we are not speculating on possibilities but dealing with what has been actually accomplished, not only in Indiana and Massachusetts, but in nearly all the states of the union as well as in New Brunswick, Manitoba and other parts of our own country where conditions are infinitely more unfavorable than with us. Are we British people, with the British spirit, or are we willing to admit that we cannot accomplish what others are doing with success?

Some of the Advantages.

A few of the leading advantages of the consolidated school may be summarized as follows:

1. It has resulted in greatly increased attendance, both in the enrollment and in the percentage of those enrolled.

2. It makes possible the development of a spirit of co-operation and community interest through the school, which is not possible where the number of children is as small as it is in more than half of the schools of Ontario.

3. The country school comes to possess all the advantages of graded classes, properly equipped laboratories, sanitary surroundings, and the teaching, under properly qualified instructors, of Agriculture, Domestic Science and Manual Training.

4. The pupils of the country, like the children of the cities and towns, are able to enjoy the privileges of a high school education without going away from home.

5. The school comes to be an institution of importance, appeals to the loyalty and pride of the people and becomes a centre for the activities of the community.

6. Teachers cease to be isolated units and are brought together in groups where mutual help and co-operation are possible, thus making it easier to secure and retain the services of better teachers under more favorable conditions.

The Railway Situation.

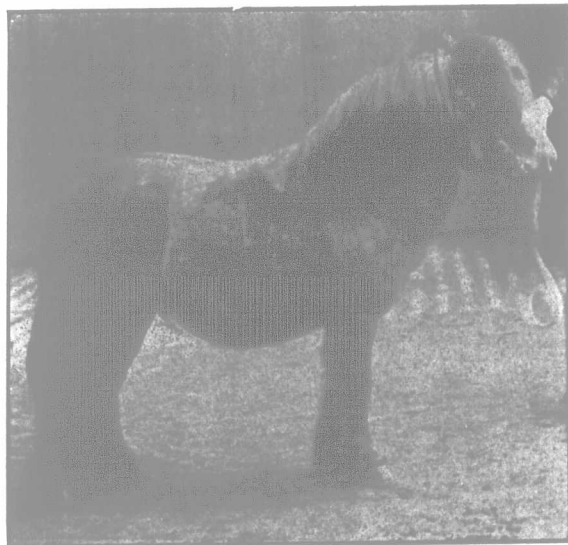
BY PETER MCARTHUR.

Prussia has been described as an army with a country. Canada might well be described as a number of railway corporations with a country. But the country lacks the population and business to make all the railways profitable, and the question arises, "What are we going to do about it?" Making grants to the unsuccessful railways merely puts off the day of reckoning—but perhaps that is the wisest thing to do while the war is in progress. When the day of reckoning comes it will involve a reckoning not only with the railways but with the banks, and practically all the Big Interests. To one who regards the situation "more in sorrow than in anger" this does not seem a good time to undertake or discuss the work that seems inevitable. The progress of the war will undoubtedly bring new developments that may be sufficiently embarrassing without courting a period of industrial chaos that might result from an attempt to solve the railway problem. Any scheme that would prove at all adequate would be too far reaching in its effects to be undertaken at a time when the whole attention of the country is demanded by the war. The railway situation can wait, but care must be taken that it does not become worse while waiting.

There is some talk of the public ownership of the railways, but it is doubtful if this solution could be attempted under worse auspices. To stand any chance of success the public ownership would have to be complete, and it is inconceivable that a railway so successful as the C. P. R. could be taken over without a struggle that might wreck our political system. We have had railway ownership of the government so long that an attempt to achieve government ownership of the railways would be almost revolutionary. And for the government to take over the unsuccessful railways and try to carry them until the development of the country would make them profitable would be to assume a burden that would prove intolerable when added to the burdens of the war. The government-owned railways would be open to constant competition by a successful and thoroughly organized corporation that in the past has shown fully as much political sagacity as it has business ability. Obviously if the government is to take over the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern it must also take over the C. P. R. But to take over all our railways would be a greater experiment in public ownership than has ever been undertaken by any country in the world. Other countries

own their railways, but they did not undertake the task after an orgy of railroad building such as we have had. Public ownership seems the logical outcome of the present railway situation, but we are not ready for it either with public opinion or with the capacity to handle the undertaking. Before the railways can be taken over successfully the public must be educated to the magnitude of the task, and an organization perfected that would be greater than any railway organization now in existence. Even the most ardent advocates of public ownership may well be staggered by the prospect. And the worst of it is that we would be attempting to fly before we have even learned to creep. If public ownership is to be the solution of the railway muddle it would be folly to attempt it until the country is rid of the war and in a position to give the question the fullest possible attention.

But there is one solution that must not be allowed, even if we are forced to undertake public ownership at once. Before the outbreak of the war the railway situation was already ominous, and it was alleged, on apparently good authority, that the management of the C. P. R. had intimated to the government just what portions of the weaker railways it was prepared to absorb. These portions would undoubtedly be the ones that could be made immediately profitable, and the inference was that the remainder would be left on the hands of the government or allowed to go to ruin. Back of this rumor there were stories



The Friend of the Boys and Girls.

of feuds between railroad promoters and high financiers that would involve rival banks as well as rival railways—and stories of political deals that would further bamboozle the people. The outbreak of the war put an end to this gossip for the time being, and high financiers had to get under cover so quickly that they had no time to keep up their raids on one another. But now that the weakness of the C. N. R. and G. T. P. have been made evident by their appeal to parliament for aid one cannot help remembering what was at one time discussed as a possibility. Unfortunately this solution of the trouble, which would place the workable parts of our railway systems in the hands of a corporation competent to handle them, is the one that would be most likely to appeal to time-serving politicians ready for a deal. But it would make one corporation that is already too powerful much more powerful and tend to centralize the financial power of the country in a very few hands. Such a solution would give one group of bankers and moneyed men a firmer grip on the country than they have had in the past, and make governments more subservient to their will. Of all possible solutions of the railway problem this would be the most disastrous.

Nature's Diary.

BY A. B. KLUGH, M.A.

A question of great importance which confronts us is the conservation of the wild life of the Province of Ontario. This Province was originally richly endowed with desirable species of animals, but to-day only a remnant of this endowment is left. It is a duty which we owe to posterity to see that this remnant is not wiped out. There are people who ask, "What has posterity done for me that I should do anything for posterity?" These people are, I believe, an insignificant minority, though we must concede that very many, far too many, people by their actions or often by their lack of action, appear to belong to this class. Conservation of our wild life has not been adequately practiced, not because of any deliberate attitude on the part of the people, but because of lack of thought on the subject, because of inertia, because "what is everybody's business is nobody's business." But if our desirable forms of wild life are to be conserved this thoughtlessness must cease, this inertia must be overcome, and every right-thinking man must make it his particular business to aid in bringing about, not only conservation of the remnant, but a large increase in the numbers of the valuable species.

There are some who think only in dollars and cents

who will ask, "What is there in conserving and increasing our game supply?" To them we can reply in language which they will understand, "Thousands of dollars." Good hunting and good fishing attract large numbers of tourists who spend money freely in those localities in which good sport exists.

Granting then that from every standpoint conservation of our valuable forms of wild life is desirable, and should be seriously and earnestly undertaken at once, we come to the question as to the methods by which it can be brought about. These are:

The creation of strong public opinion in favor of conservation.

The formation of Fish and Game Protective Societies in every locality.

The enacting of proper laws regulating hunting and fishing.

The rigid enforcement of these laws.

The absolute prohibition of the sale of game and game fishes.

The institution of a gun license.

The creation of game sanctuaries.

The negotiation of a migratory bird treaty between Canada and the United States.

Under each of these heads I shall have more to say later, and in the meantime I should be glad to hear from every reader of "The Farmer's Advocate" who is willing to aid in this great work of conservation. I should be glad of any suggestions or recommendations which any reader has to make.

I am in receipt of the following letter from Miss Mary Waddell, of Orono, Ont., concerning an animal she has come across. "Last week I saw a reptile which I believe to be a lizard. It was probably nine or ten inches long, body tapering down to a point, had four legs, head somewhat like that of a snake, was a dark grey color, with light marks on its sides. Would you kindly tell me something of the life, habits and use of this reptile? I can find nothing in any of the books I have consulted."

This animal is undoubtedly a Salamander, and from the description of its color is apparently a specimen of the species often called the Gray Salamander. The Salamanders differ from the Lizards externally, chiefly in having moist, smooth skins instead of the dry, scaly skins possessed by the Lizards. Internally one of the main differences is that the heart of the Salamander has, like that of the Frog, two auricles and one ventricle, while the heart of the Lizard has, like that of the Snake, two auricles and two ventricles. They differ from the Lizards in the kind of places they frequent, the Salamanders being found in rather moist and shady places, the Lizards in dry, sunny places.

We have in Canada a good many species of Salamanders, and they are distributed pretty generally over the country, while we have but two species of Lizards, neither of which is at all generally distributed. These two species are the Blue-tailed Skink, found in the extreme southwestern counties of Ontario, and the Northern Alligator Lizard, found in British Columbia.

The eggs of the Salamanders are laid in the water, where the young on hatching pass a tadpole stage, breathing for a time by means of external gills. Later internal gills develop and finally lungs.

The Salamanders are most commonly found under decaying logs in the woods, and they feed on small insects. Many people are afraid of these little animals, being under the impression that they are venomous, but they are perfectly harmless and do not even possess teeth.

THE HORSE.

On the Horse Question.

The following letter from Wm. Smith, M.P., Chairman of the Record Board, and Jno. W. Brant, Accountant Canadian National Live Stock Records, has recently been received at this office. It will be of interest to horsemen and mare owners. There is now little doubt but that horses will be higher in price. There are still plenty of horses in Canada, but breeding operations should not be curtailed. Horses are sure to be in keener demand. Good horses are not easy to buy, so we are told, but we were talking, the other day, to a man who offered \$200 for a filly colt at weaning two years ago and bought the same filly recently for \$150, and she had gone on and developed satisfactorily. Horses are still comparatively low, but the enquiry is improving. It looks like a good year to breed for the future. Insist upon quality. Read the letter from Mr. Smith and Mr. Brant.

"The breeding of horses has become a matter of prime necessity. Before the war commenced there was a slump in prices, owing to financial conditions and the inroads of motor power that led to a cessation of breeding. Then the war came with its demand for certain classes. Following the previous decline in the demand many farmers sacrificed their mares. The result is a serious depletion and a sure scarcity.

"The demand is increasing and will continue to increase long after peace has been declared. If Canada is to take advantage of the situation the time to start in is now. There will be an assured market demand for foals at weaning time from mares bred now.

"Not only has the wastage by reason of war been enormous, but in all the belligerent countries, not omitting Great Britain, there has either been a partial