

## The Farmer's Advocate AND HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE  
DOMINION.

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down, there should be no need in a producing and exporting country like Canada for very much price fixing and its attendant difficulties. An open market and a world shortage, according to those in charge of the increased production campaign, and we believe they are right, ensure high prices for this and next year. Canada's patriotic farmers also feel that they are doing their part by producing all they can, and they feel reasonably sure of good prices besides. They have no more use for the food speculator than has the consumer. A minimum price could scarcely increase acreage for this year, and it is doubtful whether it could be set high enough to even interest the farmer. (Remember the British Government offer of \$1.30 per bushel for No. 1 Northern wheat.) Maximum prices as set by governments have always failed. If the worst comes to the worst there is only one way to deal with the whole situation, and that is control consumption of food on the ticket or some other basis as in Britain and Germany, but such is scarcely likely in a producing country like Canada. We have more faith, in an unhampered, fair-flowing commerce to pull this country through than in any scheme of governmental control of food-stuffs. In the meantime it is well to think over the situation and become acquainted with the facts. There is nothing saved by leaving eggs out of a cake and putting in something more expensive than eggs. We still have faith in the Canadian farmer and in the Canadian consumer. Both are good and necessary classes of people, and out of it all they should eventually reach a better understanding of one another.

If the few farmers who have not done their part toward enlistment, or production, or patriotic effort could be shaken up in a large sack with the few narrow-minded little shrimps who still accuse farmers of being slackers, we do not know which would get out first. It would be well if neither escaped. All but a few men on the land have done their duty as they saw it, and it is equally noteworthy that the vast majority of city residents have made sacrifices without number toward the cause of liberty. It is manifestly unfair to measure the good deeds of the rural people by calling attention to the shortcomings of a handful of misfits. It would be just as wide of the mark to measure all city people by the silly utterances of a few misinformed, talkative individuals. The masses of thinking people, whether they live in country or city, are earnestly endeavoring to

do their best to help solve the problems of the day, and should not be subjected to any slurs from any source.

### The Railway Problem.

The Royal Commission, consisting of Sir Henry Drayton, W. M. Acworth and A. H. Smith, appointed last July to make an investigation into the transportation problem in Canada, recently brought down their report, or reports, for a majority and minority report resulted. The majority report subscribed to by the two first named Commissioners contained recommendations which will interest all Canadians, in that nationalization of the Grand Trunk, Grand Trunk Pacific and Canadian Northern roads into one great system was thought advisable. The minority report, bearing the name of Mr. Smith, a practical railwayman of the United States and President of the New York Central lines, favored restricting the Canadian Northern to Western Canada, where it would operate all roads other than the C. P. R., and confine the G. T. R. to Eastern Canada where it would operate all C. N. R. eastern lines. The connecting links between East and West were to be leased to either the C. N. R. or the G. T. R. for a term of years.

It is well that the Commission's reports were made so promptly. Obviously something must be done to better Canada's railway transportation facilities. In the West the best and most prompt service in the way of moving grain is not always possible on the lines as they now exist. The report states that in the East the Grand Trunk requires at least 200 more locomotives and at least 10,000 freight cars. The equipment is getting older month by month and year by year. Shortage of help and necessary curtailment of expenditure are not conducive to keeping roadbeds and equipment in the best possible condition. Deferred expenditures must be made sooner or later.

The people of Canada have invested about one billion dollars in the chief railway corporations of this country. The C. N. R. has had assistance to the extent of 300 millions of dollars. The company had a deficit of five millions last year. The Grand Trunk, through its G. T. P. liabilities, has to raise over seven million dollars per year. The Canadian Parliament—the people—will have to pay. This means over twelve million dollars annually, whereas the Commission estimates that a little over twelve million dollars per annum would represent the annual liability of the Government to meet unearned interest charges for the first few years under commission control.

There was another good point in the report, viz., the recommendation that all future outlay on the Hudson's Bay Railway be reduced to the lowest possible point.

The folly of too many roads paralleling one another is plain. Whether hauls are short or long the roads cannot endure without State aid. This should be remembered in future construction, be it of electric or steam roads. The people must build and maintain the roads. Therefore, they should, in so far as possible, tap new country where they will do most good.

Nationalize railways? Yes, in so far as practicable. The Commission found the C. P. R. to be on a sound basis, and recommended that it remain a private enterprise. The other big roads they recommended to go into a second great system, including the C. N. R., the G. T. R., the G. T. P., and the I. C. R., and these to be placed under a board of five trustees. This is to avoid the danger of political intrigue. Under no consideration should politics be allowed to enter into the management of the system if the idea is finally worked out. Politics would ruin any commercial enterprise. Political control would be far more costly and far less satisfactory than private control. Properly appointed and judiciously selected trustees should form an efficient means of state control without politics. Are the people ready for the trial? They have paid for the roads and the right of their control. The Canadian people have paid over \$30,000 per mile toward the building of the country's railways, taking the entire mileage into consideration. Is it not about time something was done toward control? To a large extent the prosperity and success of the country depend on railroads. They must not be allowed to deteriorate or what will happen industry and credit? Unnecessary duplication must be avoided, or operating expenses will be unwarranted as compared with returns. Untapped districts must be opened up. The problem is the people's. They foot the bill, win or lose, and it seems no more than right that they should control. The railways are in Canada; let their control be here too.

### Nature's Diary.

A. B. KLUGH, M. A.

The Marsh Hawk, (*Circus hudsonius*), is fairly common from the Atlantic to the Pacific and as far north as Hudson's Bay, Great Bear Lake, and Alaska. Over most of this region it is a summer resident only, but winters regularly in Southern British Columbia and occasional individuals are seen in winter in Southern Ontario. In Ontario it arrives early in April and leaves in October. Its winter range is from Southern New York, Northern Illinois, Northern Kansas, and Southern British Columbia, south to Central America.

As may be seen from Figure 3 the outline of the Marsh Hawk, as seen directly overhead, shows long wings and a long tail, with several narrow bars on the tail. This is, however, one of the few Hawks which is more often seen close to the ground than high in the air, and at such times it shows its very characteristic identification mark—the band of white across the rump. It is a large Hawk, being from nineteen to twenty-two inches in length. This species varies a great deal in plumage, the adult male being slaty blue above and white with rusty spots below, while the female and young are brownish-black, mixed with rusty, above and rusty, with black streaks, below.



Fig. 3.—Marsh Hawk.

The Marsh Hawk nests on the ground, usually in a marsh or at the edge of a bog, but sometimes in uncultivated fields. The nest is composed of twigs and dried grass. The eggs are four or five in number, pale greenish-white in color, sometimes faintly spotted with light brown or lilac. The period of incubation is from twenty-six to twenty-eight days.

When one approaches the vicinity of the nest the parents circle excitedly about, making frequent feints at striking. Straight as an arrow they come until but a few feet from your head, then with a sudden swerve they sweep by, fanning your face with the wind of their wings. All the time they keep up a harsh, screaming, "Chee-chee-chee-chee-chee."

The main item of food of the Marsh Hawk is meadow mice, and it is these injurious little rodents which it is seeking when we see it beating to and fro over the fields. It also feeds on rabbits, squirrels, snakes, frogs and an occasional small bird. The birds taken are small, ground-haunting species, such as the Vesper, Savanna and other sparrows, and so rarely are even these birds captured that it would appear as if they were pounced upon while half hidden in the grass in mistake for a mouse.

The American Rough-legged Hawk is a common summer resident in Labrador, Ungava, and in the barren grounds west of Hudson's Bay, and is seen as a migrant in spring and fall in the Maritime Provinces, Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. Sometimes remarkable migrations of this species occur, such as that in Ontario in October 1895, when an immense flight of these birds took place. Its winter range is in the middle states south to Virginia, Missouri and Central California.



Fig. 4.—American Rough-legged Hawk.

This species builds its nest either on the top of a cliff or in the fork of a tree. The nest is composed of sticks and small branches, lined with dried grass, moss, down and feathers. The eggs are from three to five in number, and are dull white in color, blotched with reddish-brown. The incubation period is 23 days.

The Rough-leg as may be seen from Figure 4, may be identified by its outline which shows ample wings and a short, broad tail, the heavy, black band immediately above the white tip of the tail, and the black patch on the lower breast and abdomen. It is about twenty-four inches in length.

Like many of the Hawks the Rough-leg varies greatly in its plumage. The upper parts vary in different individuals from light amber brown to dark chocolate, while the under parts show much difference in the amount of black present. Some individuals are entirely glossy black, except on the top of the head, forehead, throat, base of the tail and bars on the tail. In this species the legs are feathered right down to the toes, whence its name.

The staple article of diet of the Rough-legged Hawk is mice, and it never takes birds of any kind. It has been asserted that the Rough-leg preys on ducks and other water-fowl, but the stomachs of individuals taken in localities where water-fowl were extremely plentiful contained no trace of such food, but were on the other hand filled with the remains of meadow mice, so that it is probable that these assertions have been made without proper identification of the Hawk concerned. In addition to mice the Rough-leg also occasionally takes squirrels and rabbits.

This species hunts more during the hours of dawn