

Young Canada Club

By DIXIE PATTON

QUESTIONS ABOUT STORIES

Some of the Young Canadians have asked me if they may write stories about other subjects than the one given. Surely, and if it is a very good story I will be glad to print it, but prizes are given only for the competition stories. Even then, it is sometimes very difficult to decide who should get the honors.

Didn't you think last week's stories were splendid and we have more good ones this week. When you read the prize story, I think you will feel as I did that it was a great pity they did not remember about the pigs and not let the little gopher get eaten up.

If you see a prize story that you think is not as good as another which did not get a prize, please remember that we award them to the children who do the best work for their age, otherwise there would be no use of the little folk trying at all.

ABOUT THE CAMERA BUSINESS

You will remember that I extended the time for the camera contest until the first of January as we had so few printable pictures sent in.

What I want is the picture of some old person or object of interest on the farm or in the district where you live or else a winter picture.

Be careful to observe all the rules you got with your camera so that your pictures will be clear.

Have your teacher or one of your parents certify that you took the picture yourself.

Any boy or girl of seventeen or under may send photos.

DIXIE PATTON.

Address all letters to Dixie Patton, Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg, Man.

PREPARING FOR WINTER

One of Our Prize Stories

About two years ago, in the summer, a neighbor of ours could not get rid of a gopher that always used to be in the yard. During the week they missed lettuce and bits of cabbage disappeared and quite a few more of the garden things, but they could not find out what was taking them.

One day they saw a gopher with its mouth full of something and its cheeks bulging out. They thought this was the intruder so they put some poisoned wheat down its hole. The wheat continued to disappear and they put poison out several times, but the gopher must have known it was poison because they kept missing things out of the garden.

During this time the little gopher got quite tame and would nearly come up to the kitchen door, and when anyone went out he would stand and watch them as if to see if they dropped anything good to eat.

The people knew that winter was on its way and that the little gopher was storing up for it. Winter came and they saw no more of the little gopher. It was about the middle of winter that the men were pulling some hay out of a haystack to feed the cattle when out dropped a little ball. They thought it was a mouse nest at first, but on close examination they found out that it was a gopher that had rolled up in a round ball of hay and had gone to sleep. Whether it was the same one that they tried to poison they could not tell, so they put it in a box in the hen-house, but they forgot that the pigs were loose and one of the big pigs walked in looking for something to eat and on seeing this she ate it. So after all the gopher had stored up he did not wake up again to use it.

EMILY BAXTER.

Halcyonia, Sask.

Age 12.

THE GOPHER

Gophers are cute animals. They dig holes in the ground deep enough to go below the frost. In the fall, about the first of November, they go in their holes for the winter. Before they go in for the winter they carry dry grass and grain, such as wheat and oats, into their holes—enough to last them till spring if the winter is not too long.

They have pockets on the inside of their cheeks and they stuff those full and carry the grain and wheat to their holes in that way. I have seen them have their pockets so full they could hardly get their head down the hole.

They turn lighter in the fall. Nature has a way to protect nearly all of her innocent little creatures.

Most wild animals like the weasles and gophers turn lighter in the fall, then they are not so easily seen over the snow.

Gophers do not generally come out of their holes again till March or the first part of April unless they do not get enough food stored away.

They are like the woodchuck, they sleep most of the winter.

EDITH BOOSE.

Age 12.

GETTING READY FOR WINTER

The beaver, as we all know, is the emblem of our vast country Canada. Therefore, as I am a young Canadian, the most natural thing to write about is the beaver.

When a complete new winter home is needed they first find a running stream across which they build a dam, high enough to hold back sufficient water for protection for their lodges. The dam is made of logs and mud. First the beavers cut down trees by gnawing them off just above the ground. Then they cut them up into convenient lengths for handling and then roll the logs down to the shore and float them to where they are wanted. They then sink them and fasten them down with mud. Layer after layer is put down till the dam is high enough.

During the process of dam-building they save most of the bark and store it in a ditch and use it for food. The lodges are built of the branches off the logs used in the dam. The interior of the lodge is not very large, there being only room for four or six beavers in each. The lodge walls are several feet thick and are composed of branches, plastered with mud. The interior is divided into two rooms, one above and one below water. The upper one is the bedroom and the occupants sleep around the walls on beds of moss and leaves.

Their food for winter is put in a ditch near the lodges and consists of bark and roots, also poles with bark on. Passages to the feeding ground are dug from all the lodges in the villages. The ditch is intended to keep enough water over the food and below the ice to permit passage. Thus they prepare for winter in their queer way and thus they keep warm, comfortable and safe during the long cold winter.

GEORGE E. CRIPPS.

Age 14.

BIRDS AND GOPHERS

Dear Friends—I am a reader of The Grain Growers' Guide and I don't think I would like to miss it once. I am 15 years old, and I love to read the letters of the Young Canada Club. You want some girls or boys to write a story on birds. Well, I will tell you what I know about them.

Some birds, when they hear winter is coming, fly South so that Jack Frost will not catch them in the North. They stay there all winter till early in the spring, then they come back with a nice song and we are very glad to see them coming back.

The gophers in the summer time are very busy carrying grain to a hole in the ground and putting it down there and then they stay out till it freezes up. Then they go in and fill the opening with earth so that the snow cannot get in, and then, early in the spring, they come out. Sometimes they do not put in enough grain so they are very hungry.

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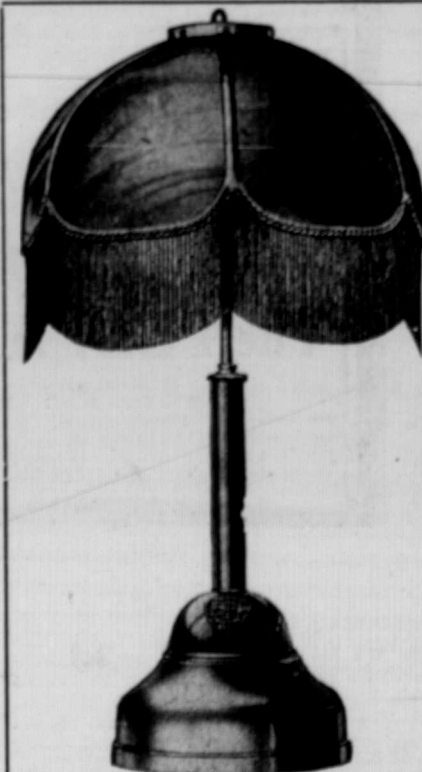


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