

The Seed Control Act.

Editor "The Farmer's Advocate":

Noting an article in your issue of March 23rd, page 510, "Amendments to Seed Control Act," I would like to know who can clearly understand such? On its face, it seems like a lot of contradiction; and I think the best way would be for the Hon. Mr. Fisher to take over the whole business, as he knows all about it, and then the public would have pure seed, or else be able to know the reason why.

It is not particularly elevating to feel that at any time you may be made a criminal of, and so advertised, notwithstanding that you may be doing your best out of such material as you are supplied with to make a satisfactory showing.

I maintain that the farmer that is worthy the name, and has an interest in keeping his land clean, is just as competent to select what he wants for seed, perhaps more so than the Government, or anyone else, for that matter; while the farmer who doesn't care, likely has his land full of all these weeds to start with, and they are going on reseeding themselves annually, and a few seeds more or less than he may get in seed he buys will not count for very much one way or the other.

J. HUME.

[Note.—Impeachment of the Seed Control Act, on the ground of a lack of clearness, is fair and proper. We find the Act difficult to understand ourselves. We are informed that it was originally drafted in plain English, but, after it was clothed in legal language by the law clerks of Parliament and the Department of Justice, so as to abridge the technicalities of the court, its own sponsor almost despaired. We must remember, though, that it treats with the technical subject of an intricate trade, and the finishing touches, especially as to exemptions, etc., were put on by Parliament itself, so that it is not strange the average man finds it difficult to understand. However, the inspectors and other officers of the Seed Branch are always glad to explain in print or orally the meaning of any clause or clauses. By co-operating with them, most of the seed merchants have managed to avoid serious embarrassment, while the Act has been of immense value in securing to careful, as well as careless, Canadian farmers better seed than they would otherwise have been likely to obtain. We cannot agree that "Any farmer who is worthy of the name is competent to select what he wants for seed." We know something about seeds, but we do not pretend to be able to detect and identify new weed seeds so well as the Government experts. Accordingly, we are buying our seeds according to sample, and sending the samples down to the Seed Laboratory at Ottawa for free examination, and report upon purity and germination. We advise every reader to do the same. —Editor.]

One of the first things being done on "The Farmer's Advocate" farm is to trim down the scattering, neglected wood-lot to a square block of eight or ten acres, fence it off, and keep stock out till it reseeds itself into a vigorous thicket. On some of the larger open spaces Nature may be assisted by planting select species.

HORSES.

Welsh and Shetland Ponies.

The increasing interest in and demand for ponies at present prevailing, especially in the larger cities and towns of our country, and to some extent on the farm, as well, as a luxury for children, will justify the using of a little space for the following condensed sketches of their origin, history and characteristics, quoted from "Horses of the British Empire."

Nature and man have combined to make the Welsh pony the hardiest, most active, and probably the most intelligent of his kind. The climate of the Welsh hills during a great part of the year is rigorous, the herbage is poor and scanty, and the grounds whereon the ponies run are always rough, and often treacherous. Foaled in the wastes, like any truly wild animal, the colt follows its dam and shares the wanderings of the drove from the day of its birth. Its life from the hour it stands upon its feet is one long education in picking the way among stones, holes and bogs; thus it acquires an activity and sure-footedness which is foreign to the colt foaled in the stall or paddock, which is never required to exercise its limbs, save on smooth ground from which has been removed every object against which it might injure itself. Such shelter as the Welsh pony may find from the storms of winter is of nature's providing, the lee-side of some precipice or some 'fold' in the ground affords him all the protection he gets or requires. To the healthy conditions of their lives, breathing the purest air, drinking the purest water, and ranging over the wide tracts of country to find food, these ponies owe their immunity from disease; the soundness of their legs and feet is remarkable; they never become roasters; and display a power of resisting disease that is not possessed by any domesticated breed of horses.

The hill ponies vary in height from ten to eleven hands; one of twelve hands two inches is regarded as very large, and this is the maximum height recognized in the pure breed.

The Welsh Cob, the product of crossing the ponies with Hackney sires, has proven a very satisfactory horse for general purposes in Wales, and is the horse of that country. Size, 13 to 14 hands 2 inches; active and quick-stepping, they carry their owners to market with supplies, and perform much of the work of the farm, as well.

THE SHETLAND PONY.

The Shetland pony, or Sheltie, as it is more familiarly called, takes its name from its native home, the group of islands known as the Shetlands, which constitute the northern division of the County of Orkney and Zetland. Shetland is a poor country, and, except in certain favored localities, vegetation is of the scantiest description.

The Sheltie is the smallest of all British ponies. Indeed, it is doubtful if there is a breed anywhere in the world that can equal them in this respect. The smallness alluded to, however, refers to height only. In size of bone, compactness of form, muscularity and strength they will compare very favorably with many others even a hand taller. The true Shetland is short in the leg, with a broad, muscular back; and, as far as constitution and power of endurance is concerned, is unsurpassed by any other breed.

The prevailing color of the Shetland is black, not, however, a jet black, but what is

known as Shetland black, a lighter or a more slaty hue; browns, bays, duns, chestnuts and piebalds are also common. The three latter colors, however, are not much in request, and, by careful breeding, may be got rid of.

The Shelties range in size from 9 to 11 hands. When care and selection are exercised in breeding, the average will not exceed 9½ hands, but in ordinary circumstances, where indiscriminate mating is permitted, it will average 10½ hands. This is the extreme height at which a pony is allowed to be registered in the studbook. The pony lives to a great age, thirty years being quite common, but some have exceeded that age. The photograph of a mare named Topsy appeared in the Scottish Farmer in July, 1899, when she was 41 years old, and she survived for three years after that, or until she was 44 years.

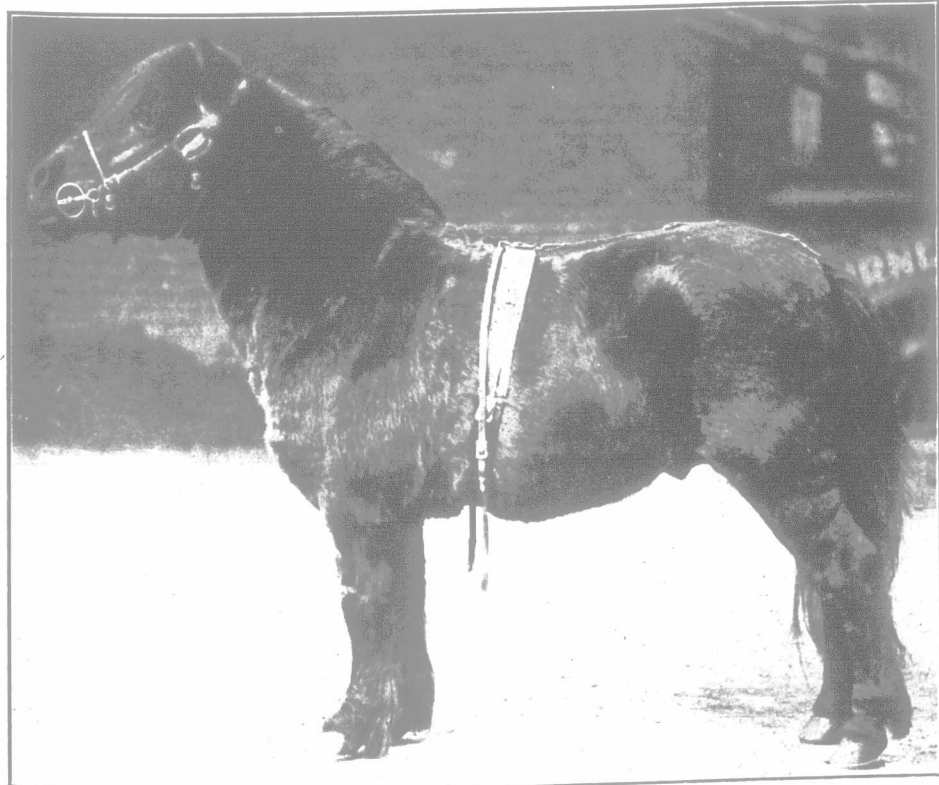
Crossing Shetland ponies with other breeds has been tried, and when done where the ponies can be housed and well fed, excellent results have been obtained, particularly with the Hackney pony, which is, as a rule, very successful. But crossing any mountain breed on its native heath cannot be too strongly condemned, as it impairs their natural hardiness, and lessens their adaptability to the climate and conditions under which they live.

Judging the Draft Horse.

Horse-judging is an art that some men are born to, and are naturally expert at, and which others acquire by study, practice and experience. Not all men become expert, no matter how conscientiously they apply themselves, or how well they acquaint themselves with the points of the horse, the types of the breeds or the use of the score-card, for the reason that their observation powers are not sufficiently keen to enable them to become proficient in sizing animals up, in comparing them in general merit, or in points of merit or demerit between individuals. It is an art, however, which anyone may become, in a measure, reasonably proficient in, providing he takes advantage of such opportunities as offer for comparing animals one with another, and has some clear idea of what he is looking for.

The judge, first of all, needs to have an ideal in mind, a picture of what would constitute perfection in a horse of the particular class the animals before him represent. This ideal may be best acquired by familiarizing oneself with the appearance of horses that are recognized as representative specimens of their kind. Observing closely the kind of horse that judges of repute select for the higher awards in the showing, is the most practical way of forming opinion as to what constitutes nearest to perfection for each particular class. These observations, augmented by a study of types and forms from photographs of prizewinners and horses of accepted high standard in their class, should furnish a man with a good working ideal to follow in judging of the merits of a single animal, or in comparing the horses in a class of some numbers, and in deciding which one comes nearest his notion of the ideal, where and why it is meritorious, and where and how far it falls short of what constitutes perfection.

The beginner in the study of animal exteriors most quickly acquires the art of "sizing up," if he trains himself to the systematic observation of the horse's "points," if he so arranges his work that the "essentials" become emphasized in his mind, and if he learns to go over a horse in such a



Shetland Colt, Halcyon.



Welsh Pony Stallion, Bledfa Shooting Star.