

A BEAVER STORY.

Dick Bird sent us a delightful account of "an interesting moment on the Moose Jaw Creek last year." He writes, "A mother duck was leading her tiny brood up stream - the downy youngsters paddling along in a compact group behind her. A beaver came swimming leisurely down stream. As he passed the little convoy, just for sheer devilment, he dived and in so doing flapped his huge tail on the surface of the water. The subsequent wave sent the ducklings bobbing up and down, almost capsizing some of them, and completely broke up the formation, much to the consternation of the 'old lady' and the babies. The beaver meanwhile had surfaced and was watching the melee. After a bit of fussing the duck reformed the parade - whereupon the beaver overtook the group . . . turned round and repeated the manoeuvre. Three times he broke up the convoy . . . you could almost see his grin, as he watched (with us) the indignant duck regrouping and pacifying her perturbed and swamped brood. I'm sure she was muttering, 'All right children, pay no attention to that smart alec, it's too bad that such hooliganism should be permitted on quiet public highways, there oughta be a law...'"

....AND A GOOSE STORY

Winnipeg papers have been carrying the story of a Canada Goose which has returned to his mate of last summer, in Portage La Prairie Park, after having been south for the winter. Frank Baines of Crescent Lake had a very similar experience some years ago when he kept Canada Geese which he had raised from eggs taken from a nest in the marshes. One of these ganders was killed defending his flock from a coyote, but the following spring his widow managed to persuade a gander from the northward-winging flocks to stay and mate with her. That first summer the wild bird was extremely wary and would allow no one around the farm to get very near him, and when fall came, south he went with other members of his tribe. Next spring, however, when the geese came back, one bird fell out and was seen circling round the farms of the district, honking loudly till he discovered his lonely grass-widow. The second summer he was not quite so cautious and would venture into the hen house so that one day Mr. Baines was able to clip his wings. He lived for many years and the details of his death are rather tragic. Some loose horses ran over his nest in spite of his gallant defense, and killed his mate. Although apparently not seriously injured himself, nevertheless he refused to eat and also died a few days later.

"Canada Geese", remarks Mr. Baines, "are wonderful birds when one gets really acquainted with them. For all round good sense they are leaders. They mate for life and are absolutely faithful."

ANOTHER NATURE COLUMN.

In the last "Blue Jay", we drew attention to Marion Nixon's 'Nature' in the "Saskatchewan Farmer"; another nature column is also conducted in the young people's section of the "Western Producer" under the heading "Do You Watch The Birds?" In this column letters are printed from "young co-operators" describing the birds they have seen and fed. "Do You Watch The Birds" has been running for some years and is certainly doing good work in encouraging the younger generation to take an interest in the bird life of the province.

We would also urge our members to be sure and read Mrs. Elizabeth Flock's delightful nature articles which appear from time to time in the Regina Leader Post.