

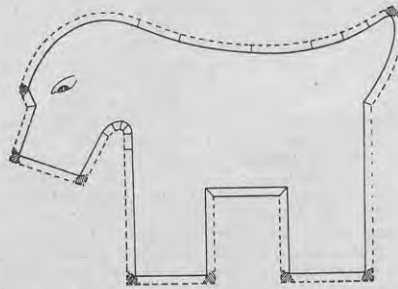
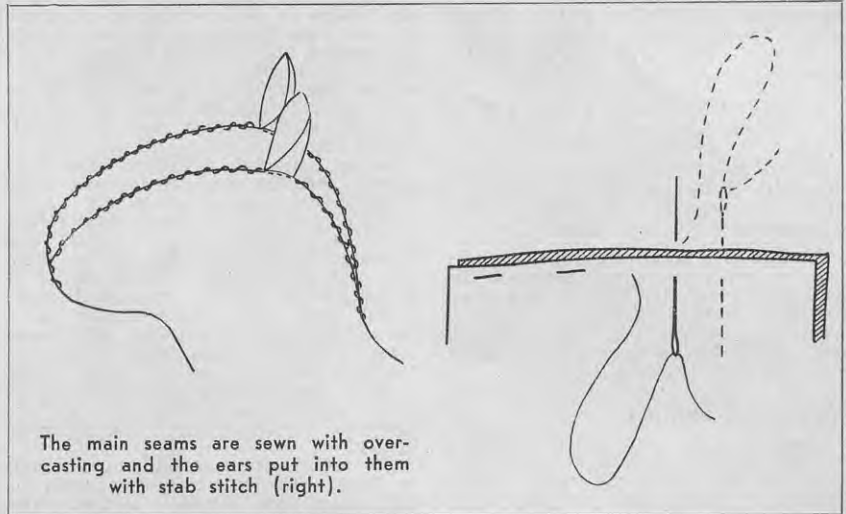
MAKING FELT TOYS

correct length can be drawn at right angles to the fold to make this easier, and then the ends of the lines joined up to form the outline of half the gusset, which is cut out of the still-folded paper so that both sides are alike. The points may be rounded off and any necessary adjustments made. The pattern of the gusset is better cut a little too wide than too narrow, as it is easy to snip any extra off the felt when making up.

Ears, tail, and the soles of the feet are cut separately. Only large animals or small animals with large feet need separate soles. Great care should be taken to have the ears a realistic shape and in the right position. A horse can be changed to a donkey by altering its ears and tail and omitting the mane. The toy maker who expects to make her own patterns at any time should collect good illustrations of animals, especially front and side views, as it is surprisingly difficult to remember what a dog's ears or what a cat's eyes are like at the moment when they are to be made.

The ears, eyes, and outline can make all the difference between a well-designed and a badly designed toy.

When the pattern pieces have been completed they are best mounted on light cardboard, labelled carefully, and marked with any guiding lines such as positions of eyes and ears. Also mark on each the numbers of pieces of felt to be cut from it, which are normally two side pieces, one underbody (or two half underbodies), two ears, one head gusset, and sometimes one tail and four soles of feet. Some of the patterns given do not conform to this plan, but they are clearly marked. It is a good idea to mark on the side piece the total number of pattern pieces for the whole animal and to label each piece with the name of the animal, as this helps ensure that the pattern is complete and correct



A pattern with seam allowance for sewing up on the wrong side. The allowance should be clipped as shown on all inward curves and corners. If the shaded parts are cut off, the outward corners will turn right side out more readily.

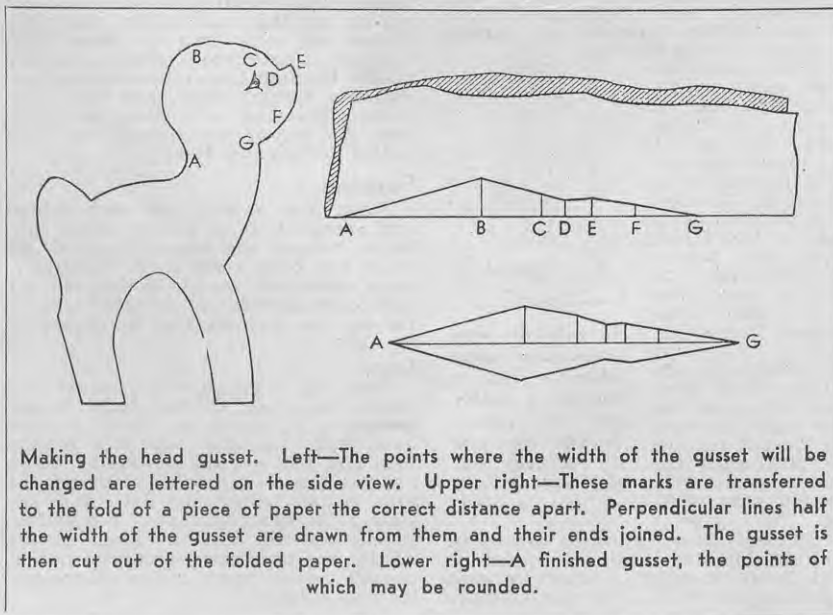
every time it is used. All the pieces for each animal should be kept together in one clearly-labelled envelope.

Stitches

Nearly all the seams in a felt toy can be made to lie flat, and for this fine oversewing is the best stitch. Hold the two pieces of felt wrong sides together and make the stitches about 1/10in. apart and about 1/10in. from the edge. Matching or contrasting embroidery thread or buttonhole twist may be used, depending on whether the seam is to be inconspicuous or emphasised. Shiny silks which fray easily should not be used, and preferably neither should stranded cottons. Use a thicker thread for the bigger toys.

If the animal has been made in a bright, decorative colour, the stitching may be decorative too, and for this blanket stitch in a contrasting bright colour is suitable. As it uses up more seam allowance, it makes the legs of the animals smaller and more difficult to stuff, so it should not be used indiscriminately. If blanket stitch is planned, a good 1/2in. seam allowance may be left when cutting out. A really big animal should have a wider seam allowance for blanket stitch, but it is doubtful whether the ridgy seam is as satisfactory as the flat, overcast one.

Felt may be machined on the wrong side if a 1/2in. seam allowance has been left when cutting out. The outline for the machining should be carefully drawn on to the material, as it is most important that the line of machining be exact or a poorly shaped animal will result. A fairly fine stitch should be used and each seam fitted carefully and pinned beforehand. However, it is much more difficult to sew intricate shapes well on a machine, and small animals in particular are better hand sewn on the right side. The seam allowance of a machined toy should be clipped with the points of sharp scissors at all the inward



Making the head gusset. Left—The points where the width of the gusset will be changed are lettered on the side view. Upper right—These marks are transferred to the fold of a piece of paper the correct distance apart. Perpendicular lines half the width of the gusset are drawn from them and their ends joined. The gusset is then cut out of the folded paper. Lower right—A finished gusset, the points of which may be rounded.