

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH silver Fox and Mink Farming

Yesterday we met Athol Roberts on the street and had a short conversation with him. Athol, you will remember, was one of the most up-to-date farmers of Winaloe, specializing in foxes and cattle, had a wonderful home and buildings and one of the best cultivated farms in the Province. A good offer made by Ralph Gay of Gay's Grocery last winter made him decide to part with his valuable property and Ralph, who had worked perhaps too hard in the grocery business, is now happily situated on the Roberts' home.

put in next Spring so that Mr. Nelson will suffer no inconvenience. Mr. Raymond, it will be remembered, came here about 1924 and starting with a foundation of some 25 pairs built up one of the largest ranches of the Maritime Provinces. The Raymond home was one of the most hospitable here and every year visitors from abroad were welcomed and shown over the property. Mr. Raymond although having no experience with foxes when he came, mastered the technique of raising them and in a few years Raymond foxes were among the biggest winners at the fox and pelt shows. Every rancher we have come in contact with expressed regret that he had decided to go out of business, mentioning his good sportsmanship, friendly manner and other qualities which were all shared by his charming wife. The Swiss are noted for their ability as hotel keepers and Mr. Nelson and the writer had a good opportunity to note this during our long visit to Switzerland in 1926. Perhaps it may be mentioned here that many of the finest hotels in the world, costing millions of dollars, are located in Switzerland.

When it was announced that Raoul Raymond of Southport had parted off his fox and mink and would become manager of Stanhope Beach Inn, Mr. Roberts' attention was diverted to the possibility of purchasing the Raymond property. He started negotiations some days ago and is now owner of the 72 acres of land, the beautiful and commodious home and buildings and the large fox ranch with the numerous sheds fitted with wire bottoms. We asked Mr. Roberts "What is your idea, are you going into fox ranching again?" and he said "No, only on a very limited scale. I intend to keep half a dozen or a dozen real good females and some real good males and pick the progeny year after year with the idea of building up a new herd. My principal occupation will be the raising of turkeys and mink. I believe it will be an excellent spot for turkeys and as you know Mr. Raymond had a very nice mink ranch. Of course everything Mr. Raymond did was well thought out and well planned and I am indeed lucky to be able to move into his fine property." We agreed with Mr. Roberts that it was the opportunity of a lifetime and feel confident that with his keen judgment, energy and other qualities he will be very happy and successful. It is Mr. Roberts' intention to remain in charge of the Brudenell farm until the crop is

We have to thank our good friend Dr. E. Rendle Bowness, Director of the Department of Fur Bearing Animals - Master Feeds - Toronto, Ont., for a copy of the "Master Rancher devoted to the January silver fox and mutation pelt sale in Montreal. It took a great deal of ability and a tremendous lot of time to gather the information this bulletin gives. Those who are interested in silver fox farming should endeavor to procure a copy. Space permits us to give only a slight sketch of its contents. For instance inferior silvers comprised about 60% of the offering of standard silvers. They averaged \$12.86, with 99% sold. Regular full silvers were less than 30% of the standard silver offering and they averaged \$16.83 and with 86% sold. This regular full silvers only brought approximately 30% more than inferiors when on ordinary sales the difference is more like 60%. (This goes to prove buyers were after the lower priced pelts.

There were approximately 7,500



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platinum pelts offered and they were divided into regular platinum and inferior platinum. About 4,300 were in the regular platinum category. The chief buying interest for this type of pelt was exhibited by American buyers who took a large proportion of these skins; 76% of regular platinum sold at an average of \$30.96, while 78% of the inferior platinum sold at an average of \$20.84. The platinum pelts that brought the best prices were large, full-furred skins in the medium to pale color phases. All these pelts showed a steel-blue shading of greater or lesser intensity. In some cases this steel-blue color was more or less limited to the dark hairs in the guard fur while the underfur was quite light. In other cases this steel color was in both the guard fur and the underfur, giving the pelts a rich, bright appearance.

The great majority of the platinum skins while showing very good color, lacked in volume of fur and were quite feathery, especially in the flanks. Buyers were very careful of this lack of volume and it was noticeable that despite excellent color or size such pelts did not attract much competition. On the other hand full-furred platinum skins that did not exhibit in some instances the clear attractive colors of the top-notch pelts, brought surprisingly good prices because the buyers knew that they would work well in garments. One of the good factors that we have lost in recent years in our foxes is volume and that seems to be the one that is causing the most grief now.

Pearly Platins - On this sale we had the largest single offering of pearly platins yet made to the buying trade. Unfortunately there were only the odd good skin in this collection and none that could be considered top-notch pelts. One thing that was noticeable is that they had a much better volume of fur than other types of foxes. Of the 1,400 not more than one-tenth could be considered flat pelts. The chief requirement in pearly platinum foxes as exhibited in this sale and in other sales is that they be light in color. This lightness can be achieved in two ways, either by developing a pale blue shade of fox whose pale blue over-all color gives it a light appearance or by developing a more or less heavily silvered type in which the quantities of bright silver gives the pelt a very light attractive appearance. The dull, dark blue pelts are not so attractive and go for very ordinary prices.

White Marked Foxes - Under marketing conditions today the breeding of white marked foxes to produce part of the pelt crop is of questionable value, while the full, bright white marked that we see in our live shows are an attractive pelt, the overwhelming majority of white marked are quite an ordinary lot of foxes that fall into price ranges as shown in this sale. It boils down to this, if you are breeding and raising top-notch pale white face types then stick to it but if you are breeding an ordinary variety of white faces you would be wise to give it some thought.

Standard Silvers - Under present day marketing plans the standard silver offering is divided into four groups, selected full silvers, regular full silvers, halves and three-quarters and inferiors. It is unfair to blame all the inferior skins on the standard silver category. If the truth were known at least half of the inferiors are the un-marked and unattractive silvers produced in the process of developing platinum and white marked silvers.

There is little doubt that the

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NEWSY NOTES

By Agricola

THE DOWITCHER

The Eastern Dowitcher in form suggests the Wilson's Snipe, says C. S. Brimley; and nowhere more so than in the long, slender, and tapering bill. Its similarity appears in its local names of Robin Snipe, and Red-breasted Snipe. How it acquired the name of "Dowitcher," and what that name means, I have not been able to discover. Dowitchers fly in small flocks (4 to 12), often associating with other birds. Such a flock was observed at Stanhope, July 19, 1933, by Mr. T. W. Stewart of Ottawa.

SCOTTISH LIFE AND CHARACTER (10)

Referring again to baptisms, there was a strong feeling in Scotland in favor of public baptisms ("christenings") down to 1750 or a little later. Then the custom was supplanted by private baptism and no man of any consequence ever thought of bringing his children to church for the purpose. This gave the ministers much extra work, and Dean Ramsay was, in 1830, greatly relieved to find that baptism in church was coming in to fashion again. What can be the cause of this change? he asks. The answer is, of course, the sentiment occasioned by the sacredness of the edifice - just as the old folk would desire to be buried in the churchyard rather than in the cemetery.

only sure and possible way back to public esteem for the whole fox business is through the improvement and development of our standard silvers for types. We have lost much ground from a quality stand point during the past ten years and it will be ground difficult to regain because there are not too many select breeding animals of this type left in the country. There is no easy and golden route to recovery, we will have to work our way back up and beyond where we once were in the quality scale with standard silvers.

In the analysis of the sale we note that 233 Platins sold at \$34; 368 at \$33; 266 at \$32; 203 at \$31; and 354 at \$30. In Pearly Platins only 9 sold at \$31; 106 sold at \$21. In White Marked silvers only 5 sold for \$30, while 155 sold for \$21. In select fulls 32 sold for \$28; in regular fulls 105 sold for \$20; in halves and three-quarters only 11 sold for \$22; 89 sold for \$10.

Last evening we had a letter from D.O. Stewart who is a member of the special committee of the Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders Association, it referred to the list of Mr. Owen, President of the Norwegian Fur Breeders Association, and Omar Stewart-Larsen, here last summer. They mentioned while here that they thought there should be an international fur conference which would take in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United States, Canada and other fox and mink breeding countries. Now it appears in Mr. Stewart's letter that they are pressing the matter and that correspondence has continued between Norway, the National Board of the U.S.A., the Dominion Fur Council and Mr. Stewart of the special committee.

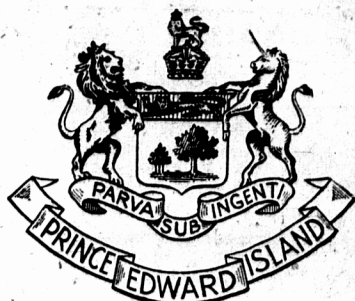
It has been suggested, states Mr. Stewart, that Prince Edward Island be the birthplace of the fur ranching industry. This would be the logical place to hold such a meeting. The idea met with the approval of the National Board of the U. S. A. and it is believed that the Norwegians and others would be satisfied to hold such a meeting here. Mr. Stewart has approached Premier Jones and he has agreed to have our government sponsor such a conference. It is proposed to issue invitations to those countries above who are engaged in fur farming and to have a meeting in Charlottetown beginning July 12th. Mr. Stewart explains in the letter that before invitations are issued the whole matter will have to be given consideration by the Department of Internal Affairs in Ottawa.

We thank Mr. Stewart for informing us and giving an opportunity through this column to acquaint the fox farmers of the Province with this much desired meeting. Fox breeders throughout the world must necessarily be friends and work together, planning production so that no over-production takes place. By wise planning and effort the silver fox industry can be brought back to its former happy state and maintained there. In union is strength is as true of the fox industry as any other line of endeavor.

There are some curious recollections of marriage customs. After the Revolution till about 1740, any man who proposed marriage was obliged to deposit with the Kirk session a certain sum of money before the marriage took place. This was called the "consignation money" in Carnunnock; and "the pawn," in Logie. If the antecedents of the marriage had been innocent, the husband could go to the Kirk-sessions and reclaim the money. If otherwise, the "pawn" was forfeited for the benefit of the poor. Another curious custom, just going into the discard when Ramsay wrote, was the holding of "Penny Weddings," which under the color of kindness to young married persons, was little else than an apology for scenes of riot and debauchery. These ceremonies (if that is the right name) are not described in the book, but the particulars may be had from other sources. After the couple returned from the Kirk, their friends and neighbors gathered at the house where a collection was taken up and the money delivered to the principals as a gift towards their housekeeping. Naturally the couple sent out for the "refreshments" so prized at that day. In time, however, the whole of the collection was devoted to making merry, and the results were disgraceful. (This custom was prevalent in the North of England too, in former times, and is described in an old book called "The Pitman's Pay," published in 1826.)

The usage, old in Ramsay's day, was to watch the body of a deceased person until the funeral. This was called the lyke-wake, meaning the "corpse-watch" and it must have had a superstitious origin. In course of time the "wake" was accompanied with much profligacy and licentiousness. Wakes were often and severely condemned by the Church of Scotland and had almost entirely disappeared by 1830, except it was said, in remote parts of Fife. In Hamilton (near Glasgow) in the early days, the town-crier announced all funerals, by ringing his bell and uttering the following words: "Brethren and sisters, I let you to wit that so-and-so whose corpse lies at such-and-such a place, departed this life by the will of the Almighty on such a day and hour. You are desired to attend his (or her) burial at next warning." The ringing and an announcing was repeated in different localities over all the town. After a reasonable time the crier went over his route again, directing the would-be attendants as to time for the cortege to start. The attendance was thus made to depend on the respect in which the individual was held when alive. Dean Ramsay closes the chapter with the words: "I never myself witnessed any excess at funerals, but that is all that I can say." That, I suppose, leaves it open to others to tell their stories - if any. I therefore step into the gap with a story from the banks of the Tyne, in the North of England. I had just gone to live in a little village, and my home was near that of a character called "Old Smith" by his compatriots. He was

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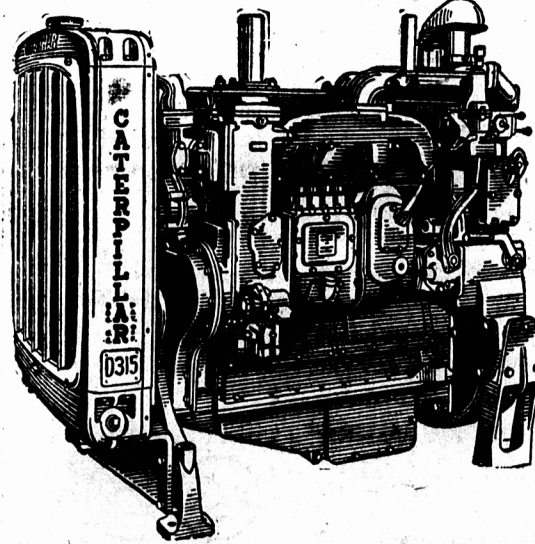
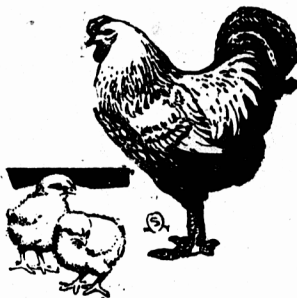
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By Ken Reynolds



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