



MODERN FARMER



TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming

Once in a while we meet Dr. Leo Frank and he inquires about the state of the fox business. Sometimes we reminisce about the old days when he and Rosebank Fur Farms were considerable factors in the industry. The Doctor stands in the law as a young man but prior to coming here had represented a large medical supplies house, calling on physicians in Quebec and the Maritime Provinces. He heard some talk about fox farming and made a trip to Prince Edward Island to see for himself what there was to it. It wasn't long before he caught the fever, purchased a property and converted it into a first class fox farm, bestowing the name Rosebank on it. The foxes he bought were the best obtainable, mostly Dalton breed, and in a couple of years he was producing good pelts.

In 1919 the writer was present when he arrived at W. Chester S. McLaren's office with 23 beautiful

It was the 18th of December, as the records show, and I had the privilege of looking over the collection. The other day I asked him if he had kept the sales slip. He said yes and a few days afterwards handed it to us, so we are now able to give you the particulars of that sale. . . . 1 pelt sold for \$725; 1 for \$700; 7 at \$650; 2 at \$600; 5 at \$550; 1 at \$500; 1 at \$475; 2 at \$450; 2 at \$425; 1 at \$380; a total of \$13,500 for the 23 pelts, or an average of \$587. each.

Rosebank Fur Farms was enlarged in the early 1920's and the Doctor was one of the first to build a "playground" in which the foxes were allowed to run around loose. This idea was later adopted by Fromm Bros. and also by Niemann's, who have immense "playgrounds" in northern Michigan and Wisconsin. Several other breeders here tried it but gave it up in favor of small compartments with wooden floors and latrine

FARMERS

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bottoms. During his career as a fur farmer Dr. Frank was a liberal user of printer's ink and Rosebank Fur Farms were featured in United States and Canadian magazines and in newspapers and gave a lot of publicity to our Province.

The Doctor was full of ideas and made a trip to Russia with the object of trading silver fox for Russian Sable. The deal almost went through. I believe it was the Bolshevik revolution when Lenin and Trotsky upset the Kerensky government that caused the failure of his plans. Had it gone through and Russian sable been successfully domesticated here it would have been a gold mine as scarcity of these beautiful furs is so great that prices as high as \$500. are paid for good specimens.

Almost every time we meet the Doctor he says, "Why don't you give up breeding full silvers and go back to the three-quarter and half silvers? They are the pelts that will bring the money," and so he was quite jubilant when the returns of the recent Hudson's Bay Company sale in Montreal showing halves and three-quarters selling much above full silvers. The trouble, I told the Doctor, is that we haven't got the blue black necks or the half blue black necks you had in 1919. They were perfection pelts developed by Dalton and Oulton and the color of the underfur cannot be duplicated today.

Now a more realistic line of endeavor holds the Doctor's attention, namely the selling of coffee and spices. How he got the position is worth telling. Some years ago he spied an ad "Traveller Wanted," and it was the firm of W. H. Schwartz & Co., Halifax, one of the oldest and most reliable firms in Canada, that wanted a salesman. After some talk with Mr. Schwartz he asked for the position. Mr. Schwartz said, "I don't know, I don't believe you have had enough experience as a salesman." "Didn't I sell you a silver fox pelt?" said the Doctor. "Yes." "Didn't I sell your secretary a silver fox pelt?" "Isn't that salesmanship?" "I guess you are right," said Mr. Schwartz. "You get the job." And now you know the reason why Schwartz coffee and spices are so extensively used in the Garden of the Gulf.

Ranch milk prices showed a 5 per cent decline compared with January 10th., at the two days sale of Lampton, Fraser & Huth, Inc., New York, last week. Only about one-third of the collection was taken up by the trade although a much larger percentage of seconds and thirds was sold. The Company's report is . . . Section 1—71,878 Olympic and Utah collection, top price \$27; for Starlight \$22.50 for Standard 31 per cent sold. Section 2—6,069, top price \$15.25 for average lot, 41 per cent sold. Section 4—4,881, top \$14.50 for skins large size, good quality, 87 per cent sold.

The Danish Fur Sale at Copenhagen last week report prices firm with all the 43,000 standard milk skins sold. They were exceptionally good quality and were sold for export. Prices showed a decline of 7 1/2 per cent compared with December when the prices were exceptionally high.

Women's Wear Daily, New York, commenting on the lack of interest at Lampton's sale states . . . There have been several cancellations of sales in the United States and Canada recently, mostly of mink sales. There are quite a few students of mink marketing who feel that there have been too many sales within a short space of time and that to continue the pace will result in cancellation of a month's mink auction activity as happened during last March and the same months in 1948. At Lampton's sales it was different to get the price trends because of the large amount of buy backs. On some pages males were bringing \$15.75 to \$17.75; on others from \$16.40 to \$19. or \$20. and still others from \$13.50 to \$17.25. Females sold at \$10.75 to \$11.50, some bringing up to \$13. or slightly better.

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- NEWSY NOTES -

By Agricola

THE SNOW BUNTING

A group of finches are known as buntings, and the word has given use to much conjecture. There was formerly in England, a stocky breed of short-tailed fowl known as "buntlins" and the name, with its contractions, was ultimately used for other objects. The Buntings are short stout, and "bunt" when compared with other sparrows.

"The Snow Bunting (Plectrophanes nivalis) is the winged sprite of our winter wilds. Its plumage mimics the purity of the crystal flukes, and it comes in flocks wayward as the whirling drifts. The Buntings are here in October, and then frequent lonely shores and sand-reefs, running over the sands in pursuit of marine insects in company with Sanderlings and Plovers. We see little of them till snow covers up their food in the wilds, then they come about the farmsteads looking for grain and stray seeds. They are very fond of oats which they shell with address, eating only the mealy kernel.

Among the roving winter flocks we only hear the soft uttered flocking call; but, as the breeding season approaches, in April, the males will sometimes sing a sweet Linnet-like song, when enjoying the sunshine in some sheltered nook. In this month also they leave us for their nesting far North in the Arctic regions. Dr. Cowes tells us, their nests are bulky structures, composed of grass and moss and placed on the ground, in the shelter of a tussock of grass or a stone. Eggs are white (Baird's Birds of P. E. I., 1891).

Snowbirds (their local name) are interesting to watch as they settle on a patch of weeds projecting above the snow. The first to reach it settles, while the others go on over their heads to settle as "front runners." By this time the first-comers have finished with the weeds, and fly ahead, over the main body, to settle again. In this way a swirling aerial "leapfrog" is kept up till the patch is cleared of weed seeds, and the flock seeks fresh pastures. If a spectator is asked, "why do they do that?" the answer is sure to be "white," though actually this is far from being the case. The white wing-patch and the white tail feathers are expanded in flight, and serve to draw attention from the other.

Snow Bunting, Snowflake or Snow-bird, AOU, 534. Common winter visitor—1916. "Flocks smaller than formerly?"—1947. Winter plumage upper parts rusty brown. Centre of crown darker, back irregularly streaked white, wings white, and end half of primaries and inner secondaries black, outer tail feathers white, inner ones black, all more or less edged with rusty, underparts white, breast and sides washed rusty; tail notched. Summertime plumage, with the exception of the back and inner tail feather which are black. Length of adults 6 to 7 inches.

Ancient Tale for Modern Times.

A visitor to the Deep South was met at the station by an old darkey in charge of a horse and buggy. As they drove along the country road the old fellow made great play with the whip. Presently one of those big yellow butterflies came wavering by when the insect fell to the ground, nearly bisected. A little farther on, the travellers came upon a hornet's nest hanging from a bough, with several of the inmates hovering about the "door." Going to have a slip at them? asked the visitor with a grin. "No sub, no sub," said the darkey. "No sub—dey's organized!"

The Sky in February 1950.

Feb. 2, Moon is "Full." Feb. 8, conjunction of the Moon and Saturn, close, at 4h. 47 min. Moon in perigee, 228,900 miles

distant from the Earth, Feb. 6; later (21h. 10 min.), Moon in conjunction with Mars.

Feb. 9, Moon in last quarter, Feb. 15, Moon in conjunction with Jupiter. (Look for rain?).

New Moon, Feb. 16; Moon in Apogee, 251,500 miles distant from the earth, Feb. 22.

Feb. 24, Moon in first quarter; conjunction of the Moon and Uranus, Feb. 26. (Uranus is just discernible by a person of very good eyesight, without a telescope.)

Mars (see Feb. 6, supra) is close to Spica Virginis and is brighter than that star, or Saturn.

Meteorites, old and new.

Meteorites (or aerolites) are fallen meteors, sometimes called stones. Usually a bright fire-ball appears as a shooting star, then there is a loud explosion while a shower of "stones" strike the earth. The stones in some cases are actually rock, but are generally of "meteoric iron"; the latter under analysis, sometimes being 96 percent pure, the balance being silica, magnetite, etc. It is noteworthy that meteorites contain no elements save such as are found on the earth. Iron ore however, is plentiful in nature, while metallic iron is scarce.

Meteorites have been observed very early times. A Chinese catalogue of astronomical events, records that on Jan. 14, 616 B. C., an aerolite fell, killing ten men and breaking several chariots. Better known is the classic account (drawn up by the order of the emperor Maximilian) of the 200 lb. meteorite which fell at Ensisheim, Elz, Germany, "in the year of the Lord 1492, on Wednesday, which was Martinmas eve, November 7, a singular miracle occurred; for between 11 o'clock and noon there was a loud clap of thunder, and a prolonged confused noise, which was heard at a great distance; and a stone fell from the air . . . which weighed 260 lbs. And the King, Maximilian ordered the stone—to be hung up in the church (of Ensisheim) and nobody to take anything from it. The last incident to prevent his subjects from chipping souvenirs from the mysterious object, Greek and Roman historians tell of stones "which fell from heaven" being preserved in their temples.

Coming to our time, the village of Alcorca in Valencia, Spain, was practically wiped out by an aerolite, August 6, 1913. Shortly after noon there dropped from a cloudless sky a great lurid ball of fire. A deafening series of detonations scattered fire in all directions, the heavy rain of itself lit up the earth. The whole countryside was set on fire and within an hour nothing remained but the blackened remains of farmhouses, hay barns, trees, and crops. The whole population of the village was attending a requiem service at the church some two miles distant and but for this circumstance the loss of life would have been great. As it was five persons were seriously injured, one dying the same night.

The greatest meteorite fall of the century, a far, top place on June 30th, 1908, about 700 miles north of Lake Balkal, Siberia. When the meteorite (weighing 120 tons) struck the ground a blast of heated air levelled all trees over a distance of 20 miles. About one thousand "raindeer" were killed, but many people since the region is sparsely populated.

These unwelcome intruders, and indeed all meteorites, are looked upon as the debris of disintegrated comets, travelling en masse in their old orbit round the sun, with a train of stragglers bringing up the rear. At times they come within the range of the earth's attraction, and if this debris is in any quantity, we are treated to a spectacular display of "shooting stars." Such spectacles have a tendency to recur periodically: the great display of Nov. 12, 1833, was

Deep Snow "Domesticates" Prairie Deer



Lovely lettuce says expression on deer's face as it nibbles daintily. Unable to find anything to eat with 12 to 15 feet of snow covering their usual feeding grounds, Rocky Mountain deer are begging in lowlands. Alberta resident, George Delany, feeds this one from the door of his store.

repeated on Nov. 14, 1866. One of my earliest recollections is a picture of the latter meteor shower with tracks radiating across the sky. It was a vivid picture and I was not content till my grandfather had explained what it was all about.

Poor artistic taste

I have been listening to recorded hymns lately and am not impressed. An old favorite commenced well with the four parts nicely balanced. The second verse was a soprano solo in an "unrelated key" two or three tones above the first key-note. The "shock" of this change broke the mood of the words, but worse was to follow. The third verse was back to full choir again with the addition of a descant which soared high above the treble and drowned out the words. By now I'd lost interest in the air. So I closed down on the record. I made a note of other hymns, however, and if all goes well, will return to the subject next week.

C. E. F. Originate New Raspberries

Seven promising raspberry varieties: Gatineau, Madawaska, Muskoka, Ottawa, Rideau, Trent and Tweed, have been originated by the Divisions of Horticulture, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, during the past seven years; report D. S. Blair and L. P. Sargent. In a test plot set out in 1940 these varieties have been compared with standard varieties and evaluated on the bases of earliness and production. The average yield in pounds per acre in the average first week in brackets, for varieties over the five-year cropping period 1943-47 was:—

Trent, 3,943 pounds (1,420);
Tweed, 3,632 pounds (1,995);
Muskoka, 2,882 pounds (479);
Madawask, 2,368 pounds (532);
Latham, 2,210 pounds (62);
Newburg, 2,201 (199);
Ottawa, 2,205

pounds (809); Rideau, 2,098 pounds (321); Viking, 1,862 pounds (108); Chief, 1,757 pounds (258); Gatineau, 1,315 pounds (742).

Tweed, outstanding because of its earliness, production and hardiness, and Muskoka, particularly noteworthy because of hardiness, are the newcomers to the variety list. Tweed has outyielded all other varieties in the test during the first week of the picking season and rated second in total production. Muskoka is promising in total production and has outyielded the standard varieties Latham and Viking. It is the hardest raspberry fruiting at Ottawa and is standing up very well to the winters in the prairies. Trent, besides being early, is the highest yielding variety, Ottawa, producing almost 4,000 pounds per acre annually. Both Trent and Tweed are extremely promising as early high yielding varieties. Madawaska has outyielded the standard varieties Latham and Viking while Gatineau production in production during first week of the picking season.

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