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TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH silver Fox and Mink Farming

At the Hudson's Bay Company and Anning & Cobb sales held in London, May 30th, an offering of 27,800 silver fox and platinum skins was almost completely withdrawn. Hudson's Bay Company's comment stated that there were only a few buyers in the sales room. Anning & Cobb's comment was that silver fox and platinum were neglected. The reason why this large number of silver fox and platinum were in the warehouses of the above companies was that there had been good reason to expect a favorable reduction in the excise tax on furs levied by the British Government. However, Sir Stafford Cripps gave no relief and furs in the categories above could not be moved with the 100% sales tax.

Mink was in strong demand at Lampton, Fraser & Huth's, New York, sale last week. More than 80% of the 80,000 skins were disposed of with prices 15% above April on better goods. Males in all sections were up 15% while females in the other sections were unchanged, but slightly higher than in April. Firm demand and keen bidding marked the two-day ranch mink sale and many observers were surprised at the continued strength. Dealers, manufacturers and some exporting buyers participated in the auction. The company reported as follows: Sections one and two consisting of 54,314 skins. Top prices, \$40 for males, \$23.50 for females; 83% sold. Section three, odd lots 21,256; top \$14; 70% sold. Section four, low grades, 2,000; top price, \$13.75; 80% sold. Best collections advanced 15% over April.

In a recent issue of the American National Fur and Market Journal, Michael M. Rich, New York fur broker, has given an analysis of the mink and silver fox business during the past season and points out what he believes are the prospects for the mink and silver fox breeders of the coming season as follows: "Last year I predicted that the opening price of standard ranch mink would be about 15% lower than the year before with less being more difficult to sell because of a large production, and because wild mink prices were about 35% lower, diverting ranch mink buyers to wild mink. Well, that came true. However, there are still plenty of buyers for ranch mink coats and one reason for that is the low price at which ranch mink is selling. Pastel mink are at predicted, selling for about 15% higher prices than last year and very few are available. Black Cross mink are selling more freely for a little better price than last year. The reason for the better price of Black Cross is scarcity as most ranchers pelted all their Black Cross mink. Next year there will be no more.

"Fine Mink Breeding—The over production of ranch mink is the cause of mink selling at these low prices. Europe was a larger buyer of mink this year but Europe, like the United States, was using mostly fine mink and fine mink is no longer available in quantities. The good mink that is available is now bringing prices that are as high as they were last December and January and I expect an advance in prices before next September. This only proves that if you breed fine mink you can still operate at a profit. The man who breeds mediocre and poor mink will be compelled to pelt out soon. It is more advisable to breed fewer mink and good quality rather than more mink of the poorer grades.

"Prospects of mutation mink—Mutation mink is due for the same setback as the standard mink. Already there are signs of a carry-over of silverblue mink. At recent auctions there was a demonstration of the weakness of silverblue. Every mink dealer and manufacturer now has ample stocks of this shade and the only type selling is of the better quality and very light shades. The ordinary quality and medium and darker shades are neglected. It would be wiser for the rancher to breed fewer silverblue mink in order to keep them in high favor. The reason pastel mink is in high favor is that the shade resembles a fine wild mink, but all the pastels that are wanted are the clear light shades with a blue guard hair, but it seems that in order to get the light colors you run into the white cotton underfur which is not wanted. A fine pastel mink should have a light blue clear underfur and dark top hair—not red.

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- NEWSY NOTES - By Agricola

THE EASTERN WILLET The Willet is mentioned by Francis Bain in 1891, as one of the Island birds, but he adds, "it is not common with us." Shore birds were not protected in those days and in a few years the Willet had come to be regarded as extinct north of the State of Virginia. By 1916 Chester E. Reed wrote that the Willet bred from the Gulf of Mexico to New Jersey and that it later strayed to the State of Maine. Under these circumstances the Willet was dropped from the list of Island birds published by the writer in 1936. During the twenty years interval (1916-1936) the Willet had been quietly staging a comeback, for Mr. Wm. H. Moore, of Scotch Lake, N. B., wrote that the Willet was "tolerably common" in 1928 and it appears, though without comment, in a N. S. list of about the same date. And at last we have authentic records for the Island, since a flock of seven Willets was observed at Priest Pond, near Souris, in August 1947, and a flock of four was seen in the same locality Aug. 3, 1948. It is indeed a joy to see the Willet again in the North Atlantic, for these and many other records.

Readers of this column will have noted that for a considerable time past our birds have been described serially. Now, it is necessary to go back and re-estate the Willet! It belongs to the order Limicolae, and shows a relationship to the Yellowlegs. It is larger than the Greater Yellowlegs, and its size nearly led to its extinction by making it an "easy mark." The color of its legs, however, is a dull blue, and this together with its grayish plumage, and rather stocky bill, are excellent guides to its identity. Its call is expressed as "pilly-willy-willy," thus giving the origin of its name. The difference of color in the Willet's plumage (it will be observed) depends, not on sex, but on season. The Willet breeds for almost three quarters of a century in North Carolina to Brazil. There is a Western Willet which, one learns, is scarcely distinguishable from the eastern form. Eastern Willet AOU 258. Not common in Bain (1891). Scarce, 1949. Summer plumage, adult. Above, gray, with slightly brownish tinge, speckled dusky. Bill bluish, with fairly long, wing tip black; but a wide white crossbar is shown in flying. "a flashing wing pattern" - Peterson. Underparts whitish, sides and breast dusky. Feet long, dark bluish, feet with small webs between the toes. Winter birds, plain ash-gray above, clear white beneath. Length of adult 14 inches.

Religion in the Curriculum (2) It is a historical fact that when a large body of nationals is allowed to grow up without any religious belief they end by destroying the churches themselves. We ourselves have seen the churches plundered in Russia, and in Spain, and are now just waking up to the inner meaning of these acts.

Democracy is a much abused word, but the true meaning of it is Government by the people, on the principle that all have equal rights. Christianity alone endorses that meaning by proclaiming the brotherhood of man under the care of Almighty God. We may thus, by a figure of speech, affirm that Christianity is the inner citadel of Democracy. When children of school age are asked to grow up in ignorance of spiritual things, that citadel is crumbling, and Democracy is doomed. Totalitarian rulers know this and always attack the Churches first. We have for years secularized our system of education in the manner already set forth. The pagan trend of our civilization began during the last war, in the unbelievable horrors of Belsen and Dachau. Germany had rejected Christ's teachings, and this was the inevitable result. It is still possible to give the children a knowledge of the Bible, of religious history, and of the power of Christianity to sustain Democracy—and all this without prejudice to the usages of any particular sect. But the time is short.

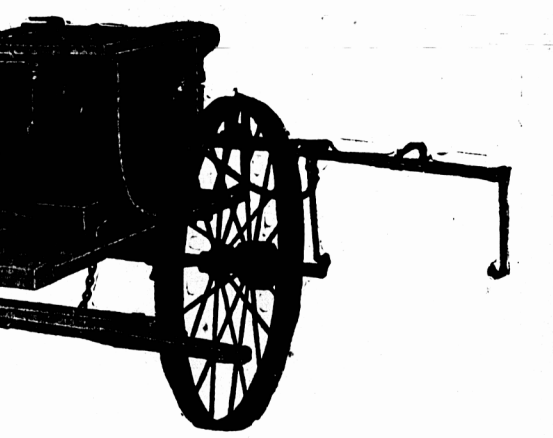
Seven Wise Men We are getting our fill of politics just now, and it may well be recalled that we owe our political knowledge in the first instance to the Ancient Greeks. The two law givers of old were Moses, the Hebrew, and Solon, the Greek. Moses issued his laws as commands; Solon issued his laws as objects of discussion. In these standpoints we see the essential differences of the East and the West. Solon was one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. The others were Thales, a native of Miletus; Chilon of Laedaemon; Pittacus of Mytilene; Periander of Corinth; Bias of Priene; and Cleobolus of Lindus in the island of Rhodes. These men are often referred to as the "Seven Sages." Periander was tyrant of Corinth from 625 B. C. to 585 B. C. (That simply means "he was governor; we use the word differently.") One day at Periander's court, Solon proposed as a question for discussion, Which was the most perfect popular government? That, said Bias, in which the laws have no superior. That, said Thales, where the people are neither too rich nor too poor. Anacharsis, a talented Scythian prince who was present, said: That where virtue is honored and vice detested. That, said Pittacus, where dignities are always conferred on the virtuous and never upon the base.

Drew And Howe's Version Of "Secret Deal"



Mr. Drew picked Lakehead, Ont., Hon. C. D. Howe's riding, to launch a series of charges against Mr. Howe over the disposal of Canadair Ltd., where the North Star aircraft are made. Mr. Howe was the minister in charge of disposal of Canada's largest aircraft plant at Cartierville near Montreal. Mr. Howe said the Government had no knowledge of the arrangement under which the original director of Canadair Ltd., Benjamin Franklyn, transferred ownership of Canadair Ltd. to its present owners. "But I can say definitely that the purchase price of the shares was a small fraction of the amount (\$2,500,000) suggested by Mr. Drew," the minister stated.

name, called C. vitalis. Changing the subject, I have a small collection of sea shells which have been named with the help of Morris's Guide to the shells. If any of my readers come across shells this summer and want them named, send them in and I'll do my best! We have a large bivalve shellfish here known as the "Covaw hawk," properly Quahog. The aforesaid Guide makes a slip when it says that the geographic range of this species is from Maine to Florida. Ganong, writing in 1889, reports the Quahog as common all round the coast of Nova Scotia, and Dawson, in his "Survey," mentions it amongst our shellfish. Ganong's conclusion is that it is probably to be found wherever the Oyster can live, and being somewhat more hardy, occurs rather beyond those limits.



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