

FOR FARMERS, STOCK BREEDERS AND GARDENERS

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox Farming



Interesting Items To Island Foxmen

The following items of interest to fox men were selected for us by the Prince Edward Island Fur Pool Limited, which receives trade publications dealing with the fur industry and published in various parts of the world.

Fox thieves are active in New Brunswick and numerous thefts have been reported within the past two weeks. The R. O. M. P. who were investigating, believe it is the hooves every fox rancher to take the utmost precautions from now on when the pelts are prime. A good watch dog is a necessity, as his barking will not only alarm the owner but frighten off the intruder.

There is very little danger in keeping a dog about the ranch if you take care that he does not come in contact with other dogs and that he has a good, warm, dry house that he can run into when his period of rest and sleep arrives. That, good food and occasional attention to his coat to see that he is free from fleas, and frequent changing of straw with a little sulphur thrown in it to keep away fleas, is about all that is necessary.

The best method to use a dog is to keep him housed during the day, allowing him out at night. In this way he will soon get to know that he is the guard of your ranch and will take over the duties and carry them out with surprising efficiency.

Vimy Ranch, owned by the McLure & MacKinnon Silver Fox Farms, Limited, was honored by a visit Sunday afternoon from Justin Rotter of Paris, and B. Graham Rogers of Summerside. These gentlemen spent a couple of hours looking over the foxes, the sheds and buildings, and the writer had a very interesting conversation with them.

Mr. Rotter is one of the best informed fur men that comes to this province, being a specialist on Silver Fox. He not only buys them but observes them to their destination, that is, being worn by the fashionable ladies of Parisian society, noted for their beauty and superb style.

The following are a few extracts from Mr. Rotter's conversation with me: "Silver Foxes are being bred all over the world and quantities are increasing every year. . . . Norway and Sweden will this year market nearly 200,000 Silver Fox pelts. . . . Switzerland is protecting its breeders by throwing a quota on the foreign pelts.

Russia is working out a big plan for the breeding of Silver Foxes and although they have not arrived at a high state of development, as regards quality stock, it would not be surprising if in a few years they become important suppliers of good Silver Foxes for the world market. This means larger quantities and of course lower prices. . . . Quality alone will pay the rancher because only a very small percentage of perfect pelts are obtainable on the different markets."

Following are the highest prices realized for tops at the November London fur sales. Hudson's Bay Company, for a three-quarter silver, £21; Lamsons, £21; Huth's £15; Anning & Cobb, £17; London Fur Sales, £17.

The total number of skins offered did not reach 10,000. A large number were of Scandinavian origin with few Canadian skins offering and almost all of these were held-overs from previous sales.

London December silver fox auctions will start next Tuesday and it is predicted that a total of over 25,000 skins will be offered, mostly Norwegian or Swedish. The Canadian section will be represented by a

few thousand, mostly from Prince Edward Island. This sale is of great interest to us here because from it we can form a fairly good estimate of the markets' probabilities for the coming year. If bidding is keen and quantities are readily absorbed we can safely assume that all will be well with the trade, barring international explosions.

Locally there has been considerable buying of silver fox pelts during the past week, mostly at Summerside where Dan Meenan, Justin Rotter and others are operating. Good prices are said to have been paid, particularly for specimen skins. It is certainly a good sign to see buyers here. If there are plenty of buyers you can be sure that the fur is in demand and the market healthy. Absence of buyers shows lack of interest.

The items from the Prince Edward Island Fur Pool, Limited, which appear on this page, will be read with interest by silver fox ranchers. The one entitled "Paris Big Outlet for Silver Fox" gives a decidedly optimistic viewpoint for the coming year. In it Leon Chapal makes the statement that European silver foxes last year were largely taken by Germany and at high prices, because Germany purchased from Norway and Sweden against credits established in those countries by the sales of various German manufactured articles and raw materials.

In this statement Mr. Chapal is hardly correct, as the London market was the vehicle for at least 25,000 pelts from the northern countries and we know also that Paris handled, or at least had consigned there, quite a number.

The fact that full silvers are not very popular in Europe but sell strongly in the United States, makes it still more desirable that some reduction of the excessive tariff against Canadian silver fox entering the United States be made. No doubt Premier King's advisers asked a concession, but the pressure from Fromm Bros and Nieman Bros. was too strong, backed up by the protest of other American fox ranchers. By hammering away at it in the future we may get the duty lowered to 25% and that figure we could sell to advantage in the U. S. A.

At the present time a buyer can pay \$60 for a real good full silver pelt here. With 50% duty and other expenses it would cost him \$100 landed in New York, and that is pretty nearly the limit of price that can be realized for a first class skin of that nature there.

Quite a number of complaints have reached the writer from parties pelting foxes, of damage to the interior of fox brushes. When the pelt is split in the vicinity of the tip, beneath the skin there will be found a state of corruption. Yesterday it was shown to me that outwardly were perfectly normal and would be pronounced excellent tips, but inwardly were in a bad state.

I have no hesitancy in placing the blame on the talmitte, and would recommend that ranchers treat the tips of their fox pups when dosing for worms with Churchill's iodine, and twice a year with a mixture of Iodol and Formalin each in one per cent solution.

The advent of cold weather here the past few days is considered a blessing by fox ranchers. It will aid in stiffening up the fur so that pelt-

From the Fur Trade Review, published in New York, the following item gives the report of an interview with Mr. Leon Chapal, who during the course of his recent tour visited the office of the Prince Edward Island Fur Pool Limited:

Paris Big Outlet For Silver Fox
Leon Chapal urges fox farmers to breed for quality during the next few years.

Leon Chapal, manager of Magasin Generale du Marche Francais, Paris, returned to New York Nov. 1st, following a 17,000 mile tour of the United States and Canada, a tour that was completed within six weeks. He will sail for France Saturday on the S. S. Champlain. Mr. Chapal reported that throughout the various important fox markets which he visited he found stocks of raw furs practically cleaned out, and the trade looking forward to the new season with a great deal of confidence. His interview with silver fox breeders convinced him that the fox men anticipated another good year and expect production to be a little higher than last year. On his arrival in New York, Mr. Chapal received word from Paris to the effect that the market there was cleaned out of silver fox. During the past twelve months Paris has proved to be one of the largest silver fox consuming markets in the world but the European trade would like to see the quality of the silver fox improved. Mr. Chapal urges all silver fox farmers to watch their production during the next few years and strive for better quality rather than an increase in the number of skins. If, he points out, the same rapid increase in the production prevails in the next few years as in the past two years and at the same time of quality continues, then there is a danger of silver fox fur becoming less desirable to the consumer with a consequent decline in value.

"European silver fox last year were largely taken by Germany and at high prices, because Germany purchased from Norway and Sweden against credits established in those countries by the sales of various German manufactured articles and raw materials. "This helped the sale of American silver fox last year. It is in every respect an unfavorable season for good pelts and in my opinion there will be more low grade, off-color, off-quality pelts than any season in recent years. That applies to our eastern provinces and possibly Quebec, but not to Western Canada where the weather is so temperate with plenty of cold weather prevailed. Fox farmers there should be in for a good season.

It is important now for the fox rancher to mate up his foxes, particularly those in sheds. The earlier they are put into open pens the better chance they have of being successful breeders. Change in feeding would be advisable, more horse meat, less tripe. There is no question but that horse meat exerts an influence on mating and the most successful ranches in the matter of production are those that feed a generous quantity of equine protein.

Now is the time before the real cold weather comes, to look over your houses and dens, see that they are clean and the roofs do not leak or that drafts of cold air cannot enter and chill the prospective pups. There are many things that we blame on hard luck that are really due to mismanagement, and I know of no game that one enters into that requires greater attention to detail than silver fox ranching.

A fox rancher near Charlottetown writes as follows: "I read your weekly Fox Notes in the Guardian with a good deal of interest and note you have a good deal to say about the Fox Club and its activities in Charlottetown. I would like very much to get on the inside of this Club and would ask you to kindly tell me what are the qualifications for admittance and what are the obligations."

I called up the Secretary, Percy Barlow, and was told to inform our correspondent that all the formalities necessary to become a member is to put in an appearance at a meeting and pay the sum of one dollar. The next regular meeting will be Thursday evening, December 12th, and the place the South end of the Agricultural Hall, Fitzroy Street. Those desiring further information should get in touch with the President, Claude G. Smith, East Royalty, phone number 574-J, or the Secretary Percy Barlow, Silver Sheen Foxes, Limited, East Royalty, phone number 1582-4. It is expected that J. Walter Jones, M.A., M.L.A., will be Thursday evening's speaker.

mean and Canadian silvers. When these skins came into the Paris market quality enhanced the merchandise in the eyes of the consumers and the European trade considered these skins at what were considered to be reasonable price levels.

"In Mr. Chapal's opinion the Paris market presents an excellent source of outlet for the fine American furs, especially silver fox, during the coming season. Increasing numbers of European furriers are buying their fur skins in Paris."

Here is another item of interest clipped from the same publication:

Silvers For East Africa
"Two pairs of live silver foxes were recently shipped by an English fox breeder to Nyasaland, East Africa. E. Forts will be made to breed silver fox in that part of Africa."

In view of the fact that a few years ago many Scandinavians visited Prince Edward Island purchasing foundation stock, it is especially interesting to note the growth of the silver fox industry in the Scandinavian countries. The following item taken from the Women's Wear Daily contains an estimate of the pelt crop for the coming season:

"Scandinavian silver fox selling opens with the first sale in Oslo Wednesday. Six sales are scheduled in November and December. The Scandinavian crop is estimated in varying amounts from 120,000 to 150,000 skins. While full silver skins are in strong demand on American markets it must be borne in mind that skins carrying over 60 per cent silver find less favour in European centres. The following two items, also from the Women's Wear Daily bears this out:

London, Oslo Silvers
"Private advices received here indicate that 12,000 silver fox are being offered at the Oslo auction which opened here yesterday. Sales at present are on the basis of 50 per cent of the offering being sold, with no demand for full silvers, but halves and three-quarters selling well at high prices, with quarters and blacks firm. Paris is the principal buyer."

"The finish of the Oslo silver fox sale produced better prices, especially in the halves and three-quarters, with full silvers sold but at lower levels, according to the latest advices received here. Except for full silvers, prices were generally estimated to be 10 per cent to 15 per cent above London. Another Oslo sale is being held today."

That the above condition prevails not only in Oslo but in London as well is revealed in the following market reports:

London Silvers
"Reliable private estimates place London silver foxes slightly easier on the average, with full silvers and darks relatively neglected. Prices had a firmer tendency towards the close. London Fur Sales, Ltd., silver fox was officially up 10 per cent for all colors except full silvers. About 90 per cent of the fresh goods sold."

In contrast to the above the keen demand for full silvers in American markets is shown in the following items:

Bright Silvers Sell Strongly
"Clear bright full silvers proved in best demand yesterday at the silver fox offering of the New York Auction Co., with prices throughout the day holding to good market levels."

The full silver offering was in active demand and about 90 per cent sold at strong market levels. Buying was by dealers and manufacturers, and continued at a strong tone throughout, although the off-colours did not appear to do as well as the bright goods. "Three-quarters brought about a slackening interest, although prices still remained at market. The offering is to be continued Monday, but so far about 90 per cent of the three-quarters sold. "Top prices on full silvers was \$140.00 and the average was around \$58.00. Top price on the three-quarters so far is \$80.00."

Bright Skins Sell Well at Fox Auction
Stronger tone noticeable in fulls and three-quarters compared with Thursday.

"Stronger demand for clear full silvers, and for three-quarter sil-

NEWSY NOTES

LEGENDS OF THE SKY (4)

The three bright stars of the constellation Andromeda, mentioned in the last article, help us to find the group known as Pegasus, the Flying Horse, beloved of the ancient poets. Pegasus is an extensive constellation, with the brightest of its stars grouped near Andromeda, but with hundreds of stars of lesser beauty. The so-called "Square of Pegasus" is formed by the end star of the three in Andromeda, (which the Arabians called Alpheratz) and three others in Pegasus. All of second and third dimensions, but are easily picked up from the comparative smallness of the surrounding stars. All four have Arabic names, which it is needless to mention here; the custom of naming them made it easier for the old astronomers to call attention to a particular star at a time when the more modern system of celestial latitude and longitude had not been invented.

Perseus again comes into the picture; a wonderful demigod! One of his tasks was the slaying of Medusa, a Gorgon of so terrible an aspect, with snakes for hair, that whoever saw her was turned to stone! An old book in my possession gives a description of Medusa and her two sisters: "They had great wings, their heads were adorned with vipers instead of hair, their teeth were like the tusks of wild boars, sticking out of their mouths, and they were armed with sharp crooked claws. They had but one eye, serving them all by turns. Perseus attacked this remarkable woman when all her snakes were asleep, and cut off her head, and from the blood sprang Pegasus, the winged horse. Bellerophon, prince of Ephrya, caught and bridled the horse, and attempted to ride him into the sky but failed. Pegasus, however, kept on and in the end was changed into the star-group which bears his name. As he sprang from earth his hoof made an indentation whence flowed the fountain Hippocrene, sacred to Apollo and the Muses.

This curious farrago is difficult of interpretation. When the legend was in its infancy, the local allusions would be easily intelligible to the people who heard it, but in the nature of things, the story would be added to as it passed from one individual and generation to another. This is a common, everyday experience, even now. In addition a kind of symbolism would be incorporated by the philosophic element of the Greek and Roman poets who made the old folk-tales the basis of their works. By common consent Pegasus has been made the emblem of literary achievement:

"He rode a horse with wings that would have flown. But his heavy rider kept him down." (Tennyson: "The Vision of Sin") How often has that been the fate of literary genius! Such may have been that of Bellerophon, prince of Ephrya.

Still going south, that is, away from Polaris, we find the little constellation Pices, the two Fishes, lying partly just below the Great Square of Pegasus, and partly below Andromeda. The stars composing Pices are small, mostly of the fourth magnitude, and require a

clear moonless night for observation. But this constellation gains prominence for two reasons: it is one of the signs of the Zodiac, and it is the "Greenwich of the Sky," that is, the stars which surround the sun, that luminary appears to get between us and certain star-groups. If you look to your almanac, you will find that the sun gets between the earth and Pices towards the end of February, and the last month of Winter is on! As the sun appears to take the same path, year after year, the old astronomers called his track the Zodiac, a name which means "the animals," because the sun covered up the constellations to which (mostly) they had given animal names. The moon and the planets too, move in this appointed path; some of the "medical almanacs" give a column for each month, telling you, from day to day, in which constellation (or sign of the Zodiac) the moon is wandering. Modern astronomers call this track the ecliptic, and because the planetary bodies never stray very far from this track, they consider that the members of the solar system have a common origin.

To get back to Pices. In your atlas all the maps are marked so many degrees (angular measure) East or West of Greenwich. Turn to the map of England, and you will find Greenwich, the seat of a great observatory, near London; and the meridian which runs through it is marked "0", because it is the starting-point by which we measure distances East and West on our maps. The English cartographers were so skillful and their maps so good and numerous that most countries agreed to this arbitrary starting-point. In the same way astronomers have agreed to call the celestial meridian which begins at Polaris and runs down, a little to the East, of Alpheratz, through Pices, as the starting-point—the "0"—for celestial measurements and the "Greenwich of the Sky." Before leaving this subject it may be observed that the word Mazzaroth of Job 38:12 I said to mean the twelve "signs" constellations of the Zodiac, which Pices is one.

I hope my younger readers, especially the ones who suggest the series, are saving their notes, which I hope will be of interest to them for many winters to come.

A RAILWAY RECORD

From London to Edinburgh is 400 miles and a fast non-stop train (which averages 70 miles per hour) has just a total of only three minutes in 120 trips—vice The Guardian, Editorial Notes, Nov. 30. Now, after the Great War, when the boys came home, I often heard them talk of the inferiority of the English railways and in particular that of the rolling stock. The "small engines" came in for a share of ridicule and the doors along the sides and the cross-compartments were hopelessly out-of-date. One could not argue with the poor fellows, who had gone out and suffered all the horrors of modern war, while we stayed at home; the only way was to wait till time should show them their mistake. The engines may possibly be smaller than some on the main lines of Canada, but they are built for speed and power—not size. Indeed they are limited in size by the bridges which carry the highways over the railroads; these were, for the most part, built when railroad first came into being, for the Briton never liked level crossings. At first engines were built with fair-sized smokestacks or funnels, but as the boilers were made larger (to give more power) the smokestack was gradually reduced till in some cases it is a mere flange. If Canada ever decides to do away with level crossings, the building of bridges will be very costly, unless the "powers that be" put efficiency before size.

SCOTTISH HEATHER

As I am writing this on St. Andrew's Day, I feel that I ought to give some space to the subject of Scottish heather—it's an easier subject to handle than the Scottish thistle. John MacGraw in his list gives the heather (Calluna vulgaris) as growing wild in Prince Edward Island, but does not say where it is to be found; nor have I ever come across anyone who could tell me. In some of the school collections of pressed plants I have seen the Sea Lavender, Limonium Heather, but it is not in any way related to the Scottish plant. Nevertheless I believe that this plant could easily be acclimatized here, since it is found in the Highlands at an elevation of 3,300 feet. Hooker, in his "Student's Flora" remarks on its presence in Greenland and also in North America where he says it is rare. It must be a very hardy plant to withstand both altitude and latitude. An old gardening magazine gives the following hints: procure the seed from Scotland and sow indoors as early as the weather will permit. The "flat" or box should be filled with peaty soil mixed with some sand, and the seeds, which are very "fine," must barely be covered. By the middle of June the little plants will be ready to pop up separately, and when they have recovered from this operation, and are growing nicely, a suitable location may be selected in the garden to which they may be transplanted. Such a situation must be sheltered from the hot morning sun, and the soil ought to have a liberal admixture of peat moss, or pure peat. In the heat of summer a mulch of peat moss will help. Once well started, remember to shear back all the old growth in the spring. Heather does best when crowded, so the plants should be set out fairly close. I learn from the same item that heather may be "struck" from cuttings, and that named varietal heather it appears! About the only way, so they have improved the heather it appears! About the only way this could be done is by increasing the size of the flower, and altering the coloration; but I shouldn't think my Scottish friends would like the change!

THE SPECIES OF SPRUCE

Who can unravel the mystery of the Spruces? The botanical "Mantissa," written respectively by Drs. Asa Gray and Nathaniel Lord Britton, cover our region, and each have features invaluable to the student. But sometimes the Doctors differ and their treatment of the spruces is a case in point. Gray gives three kinds with marked specific differences, viz: Picea canadensis (white or cat spruce); P. rubra (Red S.) and P. mariana (Black or Bog S.) Britton gives a table of differences, limiting the spruces of this region to two: namely, Picea canadensis (white S.) and P. mariana (black or red S.) This brings to mind the old saying "Who shall decide when doctors disagree?" I have heard the old folks talk of a "Swamp Spruce" but Britton says that species (P. brevifolia) grows in a country from Vermont to Ontario.

Wher do we get the funny pronunciation on C-you-pon? Is it entirely local or does it come from the U.S.A.? One doesn't look for consistency in English speech, but all sounds in "ou", from the French, are given as "oo" in the dictionary, and our word (coupon) is there pronounced Koo-pong. And a "coupe" is not a koop.

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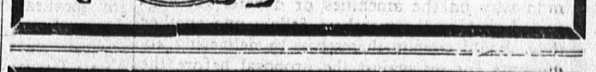
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