

NEWSY NOTES

BY AGRICOLA

THE JEWS IN BRITAIN (2)

Under Henry III (1216-72) England was greatly misgoverned and the Jews suffered severely in the reign of all his laws. The first record of that unhappy reign is in the year 1227, when the King granted the lands of one "Benony Mittun, a wealthy Jew of London, to several of his favorites; having previously accused the Jew of murder. In the 16th year of Henry's reign, the Jews in London had just completed a synagogue, when the King interfered. He commanded that the building should be dedicated "to our Blessed Lady," and turned over to the brethren of St. Anthony of Vienna, by which it was called St. Anthony's hospital. After this highly questionable act, the King set himself to convert the Jews and built a church and a hospice for those who forsook their faith. In a short time, as we can well imagine, "there was gathered a great number of converts."

In 1236 we first read of the kidnapping of Christian children, an accusation well calculated to stir up trouble for the hapless Israelites. Still, we may suppose some awakening of conscience, since in the previous reign no excuse was needed for the attacks on this people. In the year aforementioned seven Jews were brought to London from Norwich; they were charged with having stolen a "christened child," had circumcised him, and were holding him for crucifixion at Easter, when they were arrested. We are told that their bodies and their goods were sentenced to the King's pleasure—and we can guess what that pleasure would be.

Six years later all the Jews in the Kingdom were held for perpetual imprisonment unless they paid the King twenty thousand marks, in two half-yearly instalments. This must have been paid, for in 1251, the chronicler says, "he taketh inestimable sums of money of all rich men, namely of Aaron, a Jew born at York, fifteen thousand marks for himself and ten thousand marks for the queen; and before (this) he had taken of the same Jew as much as in all amounted to thirty thousand marks of silver, and two hundred marks of gold for the queen." In 1256 were brought to Westminster two hundred and two Jews from Lincoln, "for crucifixion of a child named Hugh," eight of whom were hanged and the rest fined.

About this time it is on record that a Jew of Tewkesbury fell into a sort of latrine on the Saturday and would not that day be taken out for reverence of his Sabbath. Therefore Richard Clare, Earl of Gloucester, hearing of this gave orders that he should not be drawn out on the Sunday, but on the Christian's Sabbath. On the Monday the Jew was drawn out—dead. In the 47th year of Henry's reign, another onslaught on the Jews of London took place, and the Barons slew more than seven hundred; the rest were robbed, and their synagogue was all but demolished. All this because one Jew was said to have changed a Christian more than two pence for a week of twenty shillings for a week. In the third year of the reign of Edward I, in a parliament at London, usury was forbidden to the Jews; and in order that all usurers might be known the King commanded that every usurer should wear a tablet on his breast "the width of a pavilion" or silver. Three years later the King began to reform the English coinage, and executed two hundred and sixty seven Jews and three Christians for "clipping the King's coin." These unfortunate people were first dragged through the streets by horses, and afterwards hanged. "That same year the Jews crucified a child at Northampton for a Jew's fact," says the chronicle historian, "many Jews of London were drawn at horse's tail and hanged." The Archbishop of Canterbury ordered the destruction of all their synagogues, as well.

In 1288, all the Jews in England were seized by order of the King, by which they redeemed themselves for twelve thousand pounds of silver. From England he banished them, allowing them to retain only sufficient money to take them out of the realm. The number of Jews expelled was 15,000 persons. The commons of England had granted and given Edward a fifteenth of all their own goods to persuade him to banish the Jews, and says the old writer "the mass of a mighty mass of money that was the Jews' houses, which he sold; and thus much for the Jews," he concludes. England is an old country, with many experiences, and a long memory. She has had anti-Semitic moods, dictators, and other evils, but she has cast them out, and like as some like it, she is the foremost land in the world today.

DRI-KIL advertisement for insecticide, including logo and text: "DRI-KIL is the British made all-purpose farm insecticide for winter use. Non-poisonous, non-irritating, easy to use. DRI-KIL actually kills ticks, lice, mites on your livestock and poultry and saves you 10 times what you spend."

TELEVISION STRIDES ON

In my notebook a paragraph reads "In London, July 19, 1928, John Baird has dispensed with artificial light and successfully transmitted a picture of a man's bust from one room to another broad daylight." Though the distance was short, the few scientists permitted to see the test acclaimed it as the first step to televising National events like the Derby and so forth. That was ten years ago and since then the range of transmission has been extended to forty miles. The British Broadcasting Company was coming, nationalized television as it had already nationalized radio and had taken over the Alexandra Palace (in North London) as the B. B. C. Television Station. Then came a long series of tests to determine whether the Baird or the Marconi transmitter should be employed. The Baird company takes a photograph of the scene by a film camera, and this is transmitted to the television receiver in the short space of thirty seconds. The Marconi company depends on the Emitron camera, a marvellous instrument which only needs pointing at a scene for that scene to flash up on the television set. The London Station finally adopted the Marconi system of transmission, while it is pleasing to note that the Baird receiver is favored by the public as the best for present day requirements. This brings us to the television sets, which are mostly located in Greater London. There are just upon 9,000 private sets, and there would probably be more, only people are cautious of purchasing sets which they fear may soon become obsolete as science advances. Two years ago set cost anything from £800 to £1000; today prices range from \$175 to \$600, the latter figure bringing an instrument which is a radio and television combined. They are as easy to switch on as the common radio on week days. The programs are short as yet; only two hours daily on week days. Sunday programs are longer, and perhaps these may be projected. The new mobile Emitron cameras have already permitted the shut-in public to see the Coronation procession, the Cenotaph ceremony, the Lord Mayor's Show, Wimbledon tennis, boxing at the B. B. C's Alexandra Palace, and many other events. This is one of the marvellous things they are doing in the Old Country, of which we hear comparatively little.

SOME MONTANA BIRDS (1)

The Montana State College has lately (Sept. 1937) put out a valuable little work on the birds of prey found in that State, and as they are, in the main, birds of our own district also I have pleasure in putting before my readers the salient points of the circular. Birds of prey—the hawks and owls—are in most cases shot at sight, a practice deeply deplored by those who have made a proper study of the subject; and the circular above mentioned was issued in an effort to educate the public to recognize the benefit of protecting the harmless species. The species which usually affect the farmer—by attacking poultry—are few, and are easily known by the description in the pamphlet.

The Marsh Hawk (No. 331 heads the list as probably the commonest, and certainly the most beneficial, of our Island hawks. We may see it skimming slowly over the ground, beating its wings several times, then skimming again in a low, slow and erratic, and reminds one of the flight of a sea gull. We may recognize it by the long tail and wings, the latter having their tips pointing upwards in flight. (The other hawks hold their wings horizontally.) Another prominent mark is the white patch of feathers just above the base of the tail. The male is a slatey gray, but the female and young are rusty brown. We cannot mistake the bird if we remember these few points.

The diet of the Marsh Hawk has been carefully studied in Montana by various observers. Nearly 1,400 stomachs were examined, and 55.1 per cent contained small mammalian remains (mice, ground squirrels and young cottontail rabbits), 4.4 per cent the remains of poultry or game; 32.4 per cent other birds; 4.6 per cent other vertebrates; and insects 33 per cent. The bird is therefore largely beneficial, and should be protected.

The Sharp-shinned Hawk (No. 332) has a bad reputation as a chicken raider, and it is probably wise to control this hawk at intervals. The season when young birds are about it has been confused with the Sparrow Hawk, the Pileolated Hawk, and small Cooper's Hawks, so we note the following "field-marks":—

The adult Sharp-shin is slate-blue over the back (whence the name "Blue Darter"), and has a somewhat long, slender, barred tail, and blue rounded narrowly barred wings. It is finely barred with rusty-red and white across the breast.

The Sharp-shin has none of the beautiful deep chestnut plumage of the Sparrow Hawk, and although it approximates the Pileolated Hawk in size, the latter has sharp wing tips which constitute a noticeable distinction. The Sharp-shin has a square or weakly notched tail, while the Cooper's Hawk in addition to its larger size, has a rounded tail tip.

Dr. Taverner examined the stomachs of 107 Sharp-shins, six of which held poultry or game, 99 held other birds and mice or insects were found in eleven.

This series will be continued in next week's Notes, and is worth preserving for the sake of the "field-marks"

Too Many Off Weight Hogs

Canadian hog producers are enjoying profitable prices for their product due to the fact that we have the advantage of selling on a sheltered market in Great Britain. It is only reasonable to expect that some time in the future, Canada will once again have to meet open competition on this market. There is grave danger that when this time arrives, Denmark and other European countries will crowd us off the British market as was the case prior to the Ottawa Conference. This danger lies in the following weaknesses which are now injuring our reputation as bacon producers:

- 1—Uneven monthly production.
2—High cost of production caused by improper feeding practices.
3—Carelessness in selecting breeding stock.
4—At least 50% of our market hogs under or over weight.
Two many farmers follow the old habits of breeding their sows to farrow in the Spring and Fall. This practice causes a very heavy run of hogs on the market in these seasons when the price is low. During the Summer and Winter seasons the run is decidedly light. This irregular system of marketing gives the British consumer the idea that we cannot be depended upon as a steady source of bacon. We get the reputation of being in and out of hog production. The consumer will not make a glutton of himself in the Fall and do without bacon in the Summer and Winter to suit the whims of any groups of hog growers. Such consumer will turn to Denmark or other European countries which can give assurance in a practical way, that their bacon supply will be steady every month of the year. When and if we loose our present sheltered position, we will be face to face with this danger. Even now irresponsible methods of marketing are doing us harm. Our aim should be to market more hogs in the Summer and Winter, and ship less hogs between September 15th and December 15th.

If we are forced to meet Denmark in open competition on the British market, our haphazard methods of feeding will be our undoing. In Denmark one hundred pounds of gain is produced with less than four pounds of grain. In Canada the average hog producer takes five to seven pounds of grain to make a pound gain. This variation is caused by different feeding practices. We use rations deficient in protein and minerals. We pay little or no attention to worm infestations. Our carelessness results in losses at farrowing time. We use feeds such as raw roots, raw potatoes and oats which are not basic hog feeds. We rough our hogs through the growing period, with the result we have too many reaching the market ranging in age from seven to nine months. In Denmark, market hogs range from five to six and one half months. Hogs lightly fed during the growing period never make well balanced carcasses. It costs much more in terms of feed to put fat on a pig after he is allowed to become thin. Our farmers would be well advised to post themselves on all available information relative to proper feeding practices as worked out from numerous experiments. We have some of the best bacon hogs in the world. The stock in the hands of our best breeders has been carefully selected for many generations, but among ordinary hog producers, we find evidence of little attention in selecting breeding sows. Hogs will revert to the wild type faster than any other animal. The best stock after a few generations of careless selection will become short in the body, heavy in the shoulders, and light in the hams. This means that continual selection must be practiced by the hog producer. It is not far from the truth to state that about seventy-five percent of the brood sows kept on our farms, carry defects in type which militate against the production of grade "A" hogs. This should not be the case when high class prospective brood sows can be found in every district. Too many farmers follow the practice of keeping young brood sows of their own breeding, when some neighboring farmer may be shipping for slaughter, young sows of much superior type.

During the past few years, and at the present time, about fifty percent of our hogs arriving at packing plants, are outside the desired weights for grade "A" hogs, with the greater number on the light weight side. This is a most serious situation, and perhaps nothing will more quickly ruin our future prospects on the British market if we meet Denmark in open competition.

In Canada the spread in weights for grade "A" is 140 to 170 pounds inclusive. In Denmark, this spread is much narrower. The Danish farmer is cut much more severely than we are if he markets hogs outside this narrow range. Consequently, Danish hogs are very uniform in weights. It is quite possible that our Canadian farmers will suffer greater cuts on these off weight hogs, if the number of such hogs is not materially reduced in the future. It would appear that our farmers make little or no effort to market their hogs at proper weights. Too much guessing is practiced and the sows used too little. In many cases the present cuts in prices on these light hogs would pay for all feed necessary to put them up to weight. This would give the farmer the extra weight at no cost. These light hogs continue to reach the market in the face of rising prices and cheap potatoes. Many farmers seem to feel that once a hog is shipped they have no further

interest in the matter. This same hog, if undesirable to the market may come back in spirit to slap the producer in the face with lower prices. At present the British consumer is sheltering us from open Danish competition. We have been given a period of probation to demonstrate what we can do to replace Denmark with bacon of equal quality regularly supplied. If we make no real effort to produce what this consumer demands, he will loose patience with us and turn his trade to the country who appreciates such. We must cease shipping these off weight hogs; it should be our practice to weigh every hog alive in the morning before feeding, and hold back all hogs under 200 pounds. We must get away from this Spring and Fall rush and market more hogs during the intervals between seasons. We must pay more attention to our feeding practices, and thus lower our cost of production. We must exercise more care in the selection of our breeding stock. In a nut shell, we must show that we can take Denmark's place on the British market, otherwise the British consumer will buy from the producers who will give him what he wants, and when he wants it.

Botanical Notes

(Experimental Farms Note) Christmas and New Year's Day festivities have passed with their attendant satisfaction. People require change; even from the very best of good things. Santa Claus may have outlived his welcome; the cinema, bridge-table, dancing and the blare of the jazzing radio may cease to charm; when the skates, skis, skis, snowshoes and other outdoor attractions will claim the attention of many. Some, on the other hand, will seek blessed relief and change in the ever faithful pines—Nature, and the healing silence of the wintery woods under a sky clear, chill, pale with an ineffable purity. In the austere beauty of the woodland solitude is a sense of rhapsody, like strains of sacred music. In a silence profound, tier upon tier of sombre evergreen-branches have been miraculously changed into sprays of sparkling flowers of diamonds, to be made more lovely still, at eventide, by the mystic enchantment of the moon. Cedar and pine, and fir... A sylvan scene, and as the ranks ascend Shade upon shade, a woody theatre Of stateliest view. The evergreens, like old and trusted friends—serene and confident—await the woodland rambler. When studying the native evergreens, (or conifers, which means cone-bearing) it will be well to remember that they do not all bear cones. Exceptions are the yew, which has a berry-like fruit, bright when ripe; and the juniper whose fruit is a dark-blue berry. A conifer which sheds its leaves in the autumn is the tamarack (or larch). Other trees which bear cone-like fruits are the birch and the alder. But they are not true conifers, neither are they evergreen. The native evergreens, likely to be met with during these woodland rambles, include the pines, spruces, firs, Douglas spruce, hemlocks, cedars and tamaracks. There are, however, some introduced species, which have escaped cultivation and established themselves wild either singly or in colonies, such as the Scotch pine. The native pines are distinguished from the other evergreens by the fact that their needle-shaped leaves are arranged in bundles of two from two to five, each bundle being bound at the base like the bristles of a paint brush, but by a short papery sheath. The leaves vary in length from one fifteen inches. Nine native pines occur in Canada, which are sometimes divided into two groups—the soft and the hard pines. The soft pines have their leaves in bundles of five, and are the white pine, western white pine, limber pine, and white-bark pine. The hard pines, on the other hand, have their leaves in bundles of two or three, and have cones, which are thick and woody. They are the red pine, jack pine, pitch pine, bull pine and lodgepole pine. Only one native pine extends from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains in British Columbia, five grow in the West, and three are found only in Eastern Canada. It is not possible, in this short article, to describe in detail the nine native pines. However, those people who are interested in this winter diversion which will constitute a round of benign pleasure, is applicable to the Dominion Botanist, Ottawa, for information concerning an inexpensive work, well illustrated and which tells in simple language, with the absence of technical terms and readily understood by all, how to identify pines and other evergreens; where they grow; and to what economic use they are put. The book will, in fact constitute a practical and sympathetic guide always at hand, as it can be carried in the pocket.

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH

Silver Fox Farming



The bright news of the week was the power of absorption which the London market showed notwithstanding the vast quantities of silver fox pelts offered for sale. The week prior the London Fur Sales Co. held their sale and disposed of a very considerable quantity. Then on Monday Hudson's Bay Company commenced selling and continued until Thursday noon with the largest offering they have ever made, in fact we believe a record one for any auction house—45,618 pelts. It seems almost unbelievable that buyers could wade through this immense number and catalogue them with any degree of accuracy. The writer remembers the last time we visited London in company with W. Chester S. McLeure and priced some 5,000 pelts. It was a tremendous three-day ordeal. Of course it may be that buyers now just give one fleeting glimpse and jot down their appraisal. It could not very well be otherwise.

Now coming to the results of that great sale we find 85 per cent changed hands, proving that while prices are low yet the receptiveness of the world of fashion to our product is indeed great. C. M. Lamson & Company, who are associated in New York with Lamson, Huth & Company, took us on Thursday afternoon where Hudson's Bay Company left off and in the same rostrum they went at it hammer and tongs with an offering which Colonel Dawson estimates as well over 40,000. They continued all yesterday and will take a holiday today and recommence on Monday. Cables from them state an excellent demand with emphasis placed on the more silvery types.

In these columns we have constantly reminded our ranchers that there is a great and growing demand for the bright sparkling silvers, and no matter what is said to the contrary it is our firm opinion that they will continue to be the favorites. Hudson's Bay report full silvers sold best with the Lamson's report as high as 15 per cent advance for the clear, fine full silvers as compared with their previous sale. Of course, these types are scarce and are much in vogue for capes which now have a run in London and the larger cities of England as well as on the continent.

Every day I meet ranchers who speculate as to the outlook for silver fox pelts and the probable prices which can be expected an average. As pointed out before it is not likely that the figure will be in excess of \$24.00 if it reaches that amount net. Taking the Hudson's Bay and Lamson's sales held prior to this week as a criterion it will be found that the joint net average of these two great ventures would be about \$24.00. With the great quantities that remain to be marketed including the bulk of the Canadian skins, it is not reasonable to expect that any great advance will take place.

Are we downhearted? We should not be. Every industry and every commodity grower suffers setbacks. These are in the nature of correctives, which in the long run have a tendency to stabilize a business. We progress always on an even keel and such that although any individual could make a profit, the business would prove so attractive that it would become top-heavy. The silver fox industry had almost reached that stage this year with about a million pelts. It found a world suffering from a number of troubles such as a recession which has boosted the United States figures of unemployment to the gigantic total of over ten millions of people and cut the great steel industry production from 92 per cent to 21 per cent, thereby lowering the purchasing nation on earth—the American people.

It found barriers erected in Germany, Italy and many other countries which were impenetrable to luxuries like silver fox. In France where Paris is the great fashion centre of the world, purchasing power was cut in two by the fact of the franc from over six cents to about three cents. Yet notwithstanding these apparently knockout blows we find the auction houses clearing silver fox pelts as fast as they can be offered for sale, not at 33 1-3 or 50 per cent discount, but probably around 20 to 25 per cent, depending on the quality.

Fromm Bros., Thiensville, Wisconsin, announce an extensive disease research program. They claim to have definitely controlled distemper in their ranches and have filed applications for obtaining patents with the United States Government covering the immunization efforts perfected in their laboratory in field control of the disease. Beginning this year they are prepared to accept carcasses from other ranches at their laboratory to assist in determining their difficulties along disease lines. In an article on the subject they state that distemper in foxes was discovered on Prince Edward Island about ten years ago and became increasingly epidemic from year to year. Distemper can be absolutely ruinous to a rancher as it may take as high as 80 per cent of his foxes. Pups are four times as susceptible to distemper as adult foxes, but they do not become susceptible until after they are weaned, the reason being that unless the vixen is ill with distemper her milk contains qualities which temporarily immunize the pups. The disease is ordinarily more epidemic during summer than in winter, but it may become so during the winter if it has had a start in the fall of the year. Distemper may attack foxes in their rearing pens or in the fur ranch and may be spread through the medium of flies, birds and other contacts. Dr. R. G. Green, head of Fromm Bros. investigation department, has travelled in nearly every state and province on this continent and into remote Eskimo lands. He has discovered that certain mice which abound in the Hudson's Bay territory are a link in carrying certain diseases of the fur bearers. He has also established the fact that certain ailments of the partridge and rabbit become epidemic in these far countries. Another interesting discovery of Dr. Green's is that a deficiency of one of the Vitamin B fractions may result in encyphalomyelitis, and that since this discovery the disease is becoming rare on fox ranches where means are exercised to avoid this deficiency. Fromm's have spent \$600,000 during a period of ten years towards disease study and control, and are making plans for the expansion of their laboratories at Thiensville. Other diseases which have been studied and which affects foxes are para-typhoid, which may become serious in conjunction with other diseases, and those of the parasitic field including lung-worm. This latter infection has wiped out some ranches but can be controlled by elevated pens which break the cycle of the lung-worm which insect spreads part of its life cycle in the soil. Foxes may also become subject to pneumonia and to various other infections. Their experience has tended to show that breeding does not increase immunity against distemper. At the Fromm ranches all animals are super-immunized against the ailment in order to reduce loss from distemper to a minimum.

What lesson can we learn from this, and what should be our guiding plan for the future? More rigid selection of breeding stock, more culling out of undesirable, consequently a lessened number of low grades to be marketed. Production cannot be cheapened very much, because if you cut food or use cheaper feed you will have a poorer grade fox. Labor expenses are down to a minimum, so there seems to be just one solution and that is to concentrate on better foxes. For the past two years we have heard a great deal about the Norwegian foxes and their superiority, but this season, with the exception of the November and December sales, that talk is lessened. Our advice is that the Norwegian skins this season are not nearly as good as last year. The bulk of them were pelted partly in an effort to hold color and they arrived on the markets flat and underprime. Those left unsold on the first offerings must have had a tough time of it when they met the better furred Canadian skins the past week.

The Fur Record, one of the most reliable publications of the fur trade in Great Britain, commenting on the talk of Norwegian silver fox supremacy, states emphatically that Prince Edward Island still produces the best quality silver fox pelts. The American Fur Breeder for January has come to hand and is devoted almost entirely to the American mink industry. Cuts and illustrations of the Elgin, Illinois, mink style show and an article on the first national mink show held at Elgin on the same dates—December 5th to 8th—are highly interesting. Over half the exhibitors hailed from Illinois and Wisconsin, but New York, Ohio, Utah and Massachusetts, as well as seven other states were represented. The entries totalled 353. The judging was done outdoors and a sudden drop in the temperature made the spectators step lively. The judges also had difficulty during the second day's judging because of a slight snow storm which developed towards afternoon. Manufacturers of foods and accessories had attractive booths and over 600 fur breeders were registered. News-reel cameramen for Paramount, Universal and Metrotone were on the job and photographed the mink judging, special exhibits and mink style shows. It is estimated that over fifty million people will see the pictures within the next few weeks.

The mink breeders during one of the evenings of the style show, presented Miss Toby Wing, Paramount movie star, with a lovely mink coat.

Silver fox films showing the raising of "Bright with Silver" Fromm foxes are being sponsored by the Educational Department of Minneapolis schools.

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TAKE 3—FOX NOTES The many friends of George A. Callbeck, Summerside, regret the loss he sustained by fire on Thursday evening when his fox feed house with all its contents was totally destroyed. The loss is a severe one and it happened at a very inopportune time, but knowing the driving force which George possesses we can visualize that building being replaced in quick order. What is believed to be the largest shipment of mink that has ever been made, left the Homer Fur Farms, St. Catharines, a month or so ago for Lennoxville, Quebec. The owners were forced to move the valuable animals due to the construction of a new highway which will run through the Homer Fur Farm at St. Catharines, hence the new location in Quebec. The number of mink transferred was 1,500, valued at over \$75,000. The animals were placed in double cages with separate compartments for two animals, and came through by Canadian National Express in excellent condition. The famous \$2,100 silver fox skin which Marshall Field & Company purchased at Fromm Bros. silver fox auction last February and which has been on display in their Chicago store ever since, is to be dressed and no doubt has found a lady owner. It was kept in a glass case and viewed by thousands of people. The claim is that the beautiful pelt made thousands of fashionable women silver fox conscious!

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