

# EXPERIMENTAL RANCH FOR THE SILVER FOX INDUSTRY

Of great value to the Silver Fox Industry has been the Experimental Ranch at Summerside, under the control of the Dominion Department of Agriculture. The following article by the superintendent in charge gives a comprehensive outline of the work carried on and of the progress of the industry generally.

(By G. ENNIS SMITH, Superintendent)

(From "The Golden Future")

The raising of silver foxes in captivity was first successfully achieved by Sir Charles Dalton and Robert T. Oulton in the Western part of this Island and the creation and development of this profitable industry was undoubtedly due to the undaunted and painstaking efforts of these two men. Silver fox ranching, which started as a whim and fancy of two sportsmen, has grown into a sound basic industry during the last twenty years. At the beginning of this century, the source of silver fox furs was entirely from the wild. At the present time wild caught silver fox pelts do not represent more than one percent. of the silver fox furs that are sold annually.

### Industry In Its Infancy

While this represents a remarkably rapid growth of this new industry, yet the keen demand for silver fox pelts of all qualities and more particularly for those of a high class quality, indicates very strongly that silver fox ranching is only in its infancy. The limited number of silver fox pelts previously taken from the wild, which varied between one and two thousand, did not create sufficient volume of business to interest the fur trade in general. As the number increased the fur trade began to compete for the business in silver fox pelts. This competition produced a more favourable condition in the industry and during the last ten years there has been a gradual increase in the price of silver fox furs, more particularly of those of outstanding qualities. The financial collapse on the stock market at the end of 1929 materially affected the demand for furs in general, as would be expected, and it was found that for a large number of different classes of furs there was practically no market, yet in spite of that the market readily absorbed all the available supply of silver fox pelts. Between one hundred and two hundred thousand fox pelts have been placed upon the market each year during these last two years, but the facts indicate that this number is not sufficient to meet the demands existing in London, Paris, and New York. The analysis of the conditions in the fur trade as a whole and in the fox industry in particular, would indicate that an over-production of silver fox pelts during the next fifty years would be physically impossible and further that when the number of silver fox pelts produced annually is ten times greater than at the present time, the silver fox industry will be on a better basis and a higher price will be obtained both for high class breeding stock and pelts. In the silver fox industry, like every other commercial industry, it only pays to produce the best and those fox breeders who have built up a herd of high class breeding animals are in a sound financial position. On the other hand, it is doubtful if financial returns can be expected in raising low grade silver foxes in captivity.

### Registration and Inspection

The Canadian National Fox Breeders Association have initiated, in co-operation with the National Live Stock Records Board, a system of registering pedigreed silver foxes under Government supervision and by a rigid system of inspection and a high standard of eligibility for registration remarkable results have been accomplished in raising the quality of silver foxes. At the present time the Canadian National Fox Breeders Association is the strongest financial Breed Association in Canada, and each year registers more pedigreed animals than any other Breed Association.

Silver fox ranching being the first attempt to raise wild animals in captivity on a commercial basis, it was soon found that in order to place the industry on a sound footing it was absolutely necessary that scientific investigation should be undertaken with regard to the different problems connected with the care and management of the animals. It was essential for the success of the industry that reliable information should be obtained regarding the nutritional requirements of the foxes during the different seasons of the year. Also sound methods had to be evolved to control the parasites that infested foxes in the wild state and which otherwise might become a menace to foxes in confinement, and a thorough understanding obtained of the inheritance of the various factors of the fur which make the silver fox the most elegant of all furs.

### Scientific Investigation Started

The National Fox Breeders Association petitioned the Minister of Agriculture of the Dominion Government to undertake a scientific investigation of the nutritional requirements, the control and eradication of parasites and inheritance in relation to silver foxes, giving a guarantee that they were willing to share the cost of the establishment of the research institution that would be required. As a result the Experimental Fox Ranch was established at Summerside in 1925. The Ranch itself was constructed at the expense of the Canadian National Fox Breeders Association. Twenty-five pairs of registered pedigreed silver foxes were donated by fox breeders of Prince Edward Island. The land was donated by the business men of Summerside. The Ranch was erected according to the plans and specifications of the Department of Agriculture. The Experimental Fox Ranch has been used widely as a service station for fox breeders throughout Canada, giving them information regarding the different problems that have been serious difficulties to them. Not only are the fox breeders of Canada getting the benefit of the information obtained in the experimental work, but the knowledge has been eagerly sought after by fox ranches that have been established in the United States and in European and Asiatic countries. Fox ranches have been established on a large scale in Norway, Sweden, Czecho-Slovakia, Germany, France, Switzerland, Russia, Japan and several other countries. Each year fox breeders from these countries have visited the Experimental Fox Ranch in order to obtain information regarding the latest methods of feeding, parasitic control, etc.

### System of Feeding, etc.

The research work at the Experimental Fox Ranch has demonstrated very conclusively that foxes in captivity should be fed in step with the season. In the summer, when the earth is covered with green vegetation, the foxes must get green vegetation or the essentials of it from the flesh of animals that have been recently eating that vegetation. In the fall, when ripe vegetation is prevalent, foxes must have ripe vegetation or the essentials of it from the flesh of animals that have been eating grain or other ripe vegetation. In the early winter, when the frost has destroyed vegetation and the prey of the fox is in good condition, foxes subsist on meat more so than any other time of the year, and during that part of the year a high meat ration can be fed with favourable results, which would lead to disaster during other seasons of the year. The research work has also shown that foxes in captivity are susceptible to scurvy. In the wild state they are undoubtedly able to obtain substances which will ward off this condition that are not available for them when confined to small pens. The need for a ration that will counteract scurvy is more acute during the early spring months than at any other part of the season. The breeding season for foxes is during the month of February. Females only produce one litter each year and the gestation period is during the months of February and March, when the prey of the fox is very scarce and in poor condition. The research work at the Experimental Fox Ranch has demonstrated that there is not a high food requirement during the time when the female is carrying her young. On the other hand, it is essential that the female should store up in her tissues, when food is plentiful during the fall, those units required for the development of the foetus so that there can be a sure supply independent of whether the female is able to obtain food or otherwise. It can readily be seen that if a fox required to be fed heavily when carrying her young, a species of fox would have survived whose gestation period was in the time when food is plentiful. As a matter of fact the gestation period is the time when food is more scarce than at any other part of the season and the prey of the fox is very thin and in poor condition. The results obtained in the experimental work have revolutionized the ideas of the fox breeders of the pioneer days, who were given to feeding the foxes heavily during the breeding season, while the results of the research work show definitely that the emphasis should be placed on building up the fox during the summer and fall months, when food is plentiful.

### GEORGETOWN

The many friends of Mrs. J. W. McPhee, Georgetown, are sorry to hear that she has had an operation in the P. E. I. Hospital, Charlottetown. All hope for a speedy recovery.

Mr. and Mrs. Donald McAulay and sons, Hadley and Ian are visiting in Georgetown, the guest of Mrs. McAulay's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry.

Mr. F. J. Solomon and Mr. J. W. McPhee, Georgetown, recently visited Georgetown.

Miss Anna Mair, Matron at P.E.I. Hospital, spent the week end at her home in Georgetown.

Mrs. Linsey and daughter Nellie motored from Boston, Mass., to their summer cottage at Georgetown Royal.

Miss Florence Lavers, R.N., Summerside, was called to her home in Georgetown, owing to the illness of her mother, Mrs. Mary Lavers.—A.

### GLEANINGS FROM MILLVIEW AND VICINITY

The closing of the Millview school took place on Tuesday, June 30th with a large attendance of parents, ratepayers and visitors. Addresses were given by Messrs Emerson Sheldow, W. L. Jenkins, Wm. Smith and Vincent Grant. Teacher, Miss Christine Bruce and pupils were highly complimented on the year's work. The presentation of a number of prizes, donated by the Women's Institute, were given to the pupils. The teacher, also presented the children with some prizes. The examiners were: Misses Gertrude Villet, Daisy Vanderstine, Christine Bruce and Mr. W. L. Jenkins. At the close of the examination, the pupils presented the teacher with a lovely gift which goes to show the high esteem in which she is held. The pupils very capably presented a flag drill, followed by a chorus after which the Women's Institute treated the pupils and visitors to ice cream. The National Anthem brought the interesting afternoon to a close.

On Wednesday morning, July 1st the Rev. P. D. McGuigan united in marriage at St. Joachim's Church, Vernon River, Miss Marriet Hayes, daughter of Mrs. Margaret Hayes, Waterfalls and Mr. Aeneas Curran, son of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Curran, Vernon River. The bride looked lovely in a wedding dress of white silk lace and large white mohair picture hat, with matching shoes. Her cousin, Miss Viola Grimes acted as maid of honor, and was daintily attired in a pink silk crepe ensemble and hat to match. The groom was ably supported by Mr. J. Frank Hayes, brother of the bride. Immediately after the ceremony a sumptuous wedding breakfast was served to relatives of the immediate parties at the bride's home, after which the young couple left on a motor trip through some of the interesting spots in Prince Edward Island, returning at 6 p. m. they had supper at the bride's home, where the evening passed pleasantly away and on the following evening they had wedding supper at the home of the groom, where only the immediate friends were invited. Dancing was indulged in until the "wee sma hours" of the morning. A number of young folks gathered port.

Mr. and Mrs. Howard Richards were recent visitors to Millview.

Mrs. John Larkin, Boston, Mass., is spending a few weeks the guest of her parents, Mr and Mrs. Edward Curran, Vernon River.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Stewart, Marshfield, Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Burhoe and daughter, Phyllis, city were in Millview Sunday.

Miss Beatrice VanInderstine, City was a recent guest of Miss Daisey VanInderstine, Millview.—M

and gave them a hearty serenade. Their many friends wish Mr. and Mrs. Curran many years of happy wedded bliss.

On the Wednesday prior to their marriage a shower was held at the home of the bride to be, where a large number gathered bringing with them many costly gifts. The evening was spent in music and dancing.

The monthly meeting of the Ladies Aid was held at the home of Mrs. Milton Jenkins on Thursday evening, June 11th, 1931. There were eight members and four visitors present. Meeting opened by devotional exercises. Roll call was responded to. Minutes of last meeting read and approved. There was a motion made that \$8.35 be paid Mrs. John Brown for Manse Insurance fund. One new member joined. After the usual business period a delicious lunch was served by the hostess. Mrs. Percy Acorn kindly extended an invitation for next meeting. Meeting adjourned by singing the National Anthem.

Mrs. Sadie Webster, Misses Daisy Vanderstine, Olive Venie and Helen Smith were guests of Mrs. Russell Ings, China Point on Friday.

Mrs. Eliza Jenkins and Mrs. Jane Storey are visiting the guests of Mr and Mrs. C. Acorn.

Mrs. Leo McKenna, Cornwall, is spending a few days the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. V. C. Grant.

Mrs. Grant, Millview, has returned home after spending a few days in Cornwall.

Miss Eileen Hynes, who has been spending the past winter in U. S. A. returned home recently.

Mr. John Falls, St. John was a recent visitor to Millview.

Miss Christine Bruce, Millview, was a recent visitor to the City.

Mr. Frank Lea and family, Vernon River were recent visitors to Hampton.

Mrs. W. L. Jenkins was a recent visitor to Hazelbrook.

Mr. Garfield Shaw, Alberry Plains was a recent visitor to Millview.

Mrs. T. W. Bentley, City was in Millview recently.

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The crops in this vicinity are looking splendid. Hay, grain and potatoes are making good progress.

Mr. J. D. Steele has returned to his home in Gasperaux, after spending a few weeks with friends and relatives in Cardigan and Newnumber of young folks gathered port.

Mr. Ralph Jamieson, of Boston, Mass., is here on a two weeks' visit to friends and relatives.

Miss Mary J. Steele has returned to her home in Boston, Mass., after spending the winter and spring with her brother, Wm. F. Steele.

Rev. C. U. McNevin, the genial pastor of the United Church, was visiting members of his congregation in this vicinity last week.

The Women's Institute of this district held a special meeting on July 4th and arranged to hold an ice cream social and dance on July 13th at the school. This Institute has been a regular contributor to Red Cross, orphanages and hospitals, also making splendid improvements in the school and deserves patronage.

Miss Muriel Jackson and brother Woodron spent the week end visiting friends in Lower Montague.

Mr. Ralph Jamieson, Mr. J. D. Steele and a party of friends recently motored to Charlottetown.

Judging by the number of up-to-date cars in the district, the disease known as "general depression", has not yet reached Gasperaux.

### MEMORIAM

#### ALBERT GLADSTONE ESSERY

The death occurred at the Laurentian Sanatorium, Ste. Agathe, des Monts, early Sunday morning, May 31, 1931, of Albert Gladstone, (Bert) Essery, of Montreal, at the early age of 46 years.

The late Mr. Essery was a son of the late Isaac and Mary Jane Holman Essery, of Union Road, Lot 33. He attended Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, for two years, after which he entered the Post Office Department, at Charlottetown, where he remained until twelve years ago, when he was transferred to the Province of Quebec, making his home in Montreal.

A widow, nee Minnie Teed, and two children, Ralph and Margaret are left to mourn an affectionate husband and father; also a sister, Louise H. Essery, of Brookline, Mass., and two brothers, Will, of Calgary, Alberta, and Fred, of Whitby, Ontario.

The late Mr. Essery was a young man, highly endowed with a keen intellect, an upright character, and a rare and unusual sense of humor, which was always in evidence, despite his great suffering at times. His scrupulous honesty and moral integrity won the deep respect and esteem of every one who knew him. Among Mr. Essery's many splendid qualities none was more outstanding than his intense love of home.

The funeral was held from the residence of his father-in-law, Mr. Wm. H. Teed, 246 Kent St., Charlottetown, on Wednesday afternoon, June 3rd, at two o'clock. Services at the house and grave were conducted by the Rev. Dr. Ramsay, of the United Church of Canada. Two favorite hymns of the deceased were sung, "Sun of My Soul" and "Rock of Ages." Interment took place at the People's Cemetery, Charlottetown.

The floral tributes were numerous and beautiful and included several from friends in Montreal, Boston and Burlington, Vt.

The pall bearers, all former Post Office Associates were: Messrs. John

F. Whear, Wm. Brehaut, Egerton Heaney, Dan McDonald, Theo. Arsenault and Percy Landrigan.

### ALBERTON

Rev. W. S. an Mrs. Godfrey with their two daughters Mary and Jean were visitors here last week, the house guests of Mrs. Ethel Gard.

Miss Janet Bell of Boston, Mass is the welcome guest of her sister Mrs. Mysie Seaman.

Mrs. S. R. Burke and Mrs. Mary Keefe were delegates last week to W. C. L. Convention in Charlottetown.

Mrs. Stewart Dempse of Oregon, U. S. A. who has been visiting with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Bertram Ramsay for several weeks left Monday on return to her home. Her brother, Fred of Wilkie Sask. who accompanied her on her visit home is remaining here.

(Rev.) Mrs. Benjamin Champion and two sons, Dr. William and Jack, of Philadelphia, P. A. are here on an extended visit, the guest of Mrs. Champion's sister Mrs. Hayward, and mother, Mrs. Dunbar.

Mr. Osborne Lefurgey Charlottetown spent the week-end with friends here.

The Misses Helen Champion and Grace Holland and Mr. Jack Coombs were motor visitors here from O'Leary on Saturday.

Mrs. Alvah Green of Port Au Spain, Trinidad is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Green for a few weeks.

Miss Florence Stewart, of Boston, Mass. is the guest of Mr. and Mrs. John Willis for several weeks.

Dr. Emerson and Mrs. McNeill of Toronto, Ont., arrived last week on an extended visit with the former's parents Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm McNeill. They are being warmly welcomed by their many friends.

Mr. Lawrence Campbell Charlottetown is visiting his uncle Rev. Terence Campbell, D. D. at the Parochial House.

Professor Bennett, Charlottetown was a visitor here last week during

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Mr. and Mrs. Victor Travers and son Grant were motorists here last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Willet, Amherst, N. S. are spending a holiday with their son Mr. L. R. and Mrs. Willet.

(Rev.) Mr. Wm. and Mrs. Phillips have as their welcome guest Mrs. Phillips, the former's mother who has come out from Wales Eng. on an extended visit.

Miss Margaret Stern, Charlottetown who has been visiting with her Grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. M. R. Leard, returned to the city on Monday.

Mr. George Auld, Charlottetown was a motor visitor to Alberton on Sunday.—A

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