

**TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS
CONNECTED WITH
Silver Fox And
Mink Farming**

A collection of slightly more than 10,000 Standardmink for the account of the Olympic Fur Breeders' Association advanced 10 per cent over February levels at New York Auction Sale last week. Approximately 8,000 Standards from the Great Lakes Mink Association showed a similar advance. The entire collection was 98 per cent sold. While there was some disagreement in the sales room as to the quality of the merchandise, general agreement prevailed as to the color of the Olympic offering. Buyers were unanimous in characterizing it as one of the darkest presented this season. For this reason the competition was very keen. A heavy buyer said: "Dark ranch mink is very desirable." Many of the buyers here were impressed with the collection solely because of color. They haven't seen this really dark merchandise for several months and most of them need filling in on current orders. High for the entire offering was a bundle of males at \$44 and females at \$22.50. It is heartening to know that a large number of Maritime breeders are developing real good strains of dark mink and we believe they are wise in doing so.

Plans for a Canadian Marketing Board to operate on similar lines to EMBA in the United States were discussed among members of Canadian mink breeders who attended last week's annual fur fashions pre-view and convention in Toronto. The Canadian board is expected to be in operation later this year. Plans will be settled and members named at the Canada Mink Breeders' second annual meeting to be held August 23-25 at Charlottetown, P.E.I. Norman Shields, CMB Executive Secretary, left April 30 for New York prior to flying to Europe May 22 to supervise the presentation of the Canada mink garment collections being shown, as reported, at the British Industrialists Fair, London, and afterwards at the Paris fair. Mr. Shields will go also to Germany and Italy to look into possibilities for increasing Canada mink sales in those two markets. He expects to get back from Europe about June 27th.

Locally the top man in the Canada Mink Breeders' Association is B. B. Jones, Bunbury, who is supervising arrangements for the annual meeting of the Association referred to above. We are glad that Island mink breeders are being recognized by being awarded the honor of having this meeting here and we believe that it will mean a greater interest and a much larger production of mink in the future. We have two things that are favorable, one is a climate that seems to keep mink free from any of the diseases which they are subject to in the United States, Ontario and Western Canada, and

we also now have a great advantage in that mink breeders can buy their food supplies cheaper than anywhere else on the continent.

The following is an editorial by Doc Collins in the latest issue of National Fur News. It is headed, "Two Bucks Worth" . . . At a recent meeting of the Ohio Mink Breeders Association, Melvin Hansche, Executive Secretary of the Association, stated that the biggest problem facing mink ranchers is over-production. Then he named another problem which is directly tied in with over-production—the sale by ranchers of summer and fall casualty pelts. The ranchers were shown a mink stole purchased in New York City by a mink breeder's member for \$135. It was an awful thing to be called mink. No rancher present liked the idea of such a garment being advertised and sold as mink. "These skins," said Mr. Hansche, probably brought the rancher a couple of bucks a piece. The Mutation Mink Breeders Association cannot tell you to burn your casualty pelts but that is what should be done.

"It is estimated that around 100,000 casualty pelts are sold each year by United States and Canadian mink ranchers, enough to make up 8,500 stoles, or perhaps 40,000 scarfs. Most of the pelts sell from \$1.00 to \$2.50. Usually the price is little more than the cost of dressing. When a rancher suffers a large loss of animals from disease, heat or some other cause, financial reasons may force him to sell the casualty pelts. We can understand this, but on the whole this thing of selling junk pelts instead of destroying them is so apparently bad for the industry—especially in view of the menace of over production—that it is hard to understand why any mink rancher would want to undermine his own business for the pittance he gets from the sale of junk and casualty pelts. It must be that he simply hasn't thought the thing through. Think it over, friends! Destroy casualty pelts or pelts from animals that don't fur out. Better yet, have your auction house deliver them to the Hollander's School as material for apprentice cutters. Every time you sell a casualty pelt you hurt the good name of mink and you are selling your own stake in a wonderful business for a "couple of bucks".

The BMBA mutation mink sale at New York Auction Company late last week wound up very strong. Silverblu platinum advanced 5 per cent above February levels and raw mutation prices also increased in line with dressed goods. Of the 13,000 Silverblu catalogued 98 per cent sold reaching a top of \$33.50 for males and \$18.75 for females. An offering of 1,200 Jasmine was reported 85 per

Lions Club Head



Mr. Jack Stevenson (above) recently elected and installed president of the Lions Club in succession to Mr. Jack Edgett.

cent sold reaching \$81 for males and \$46 for females.

Hudson's Bay Company, Montreal, held a special auction of wild fur skins last week. Beaver was 60 per cent sold at unchanged prices. Prices for other reported 80 per cent sold, were slightly easier compared with March. Best interest was in muskrat; 43 per cent was sold. A fresh collection of white fox sold 92 per cent at firm prices. There was very keen bidding among American buyers, who in some cases snapped up entire strings. Prices for muskrat were as follows: York Factory XL PT L Spring \$1.12 to \$1.22; Winter \$1.16; XL and L Spring \$1.04, Winter \$1.12; Spring PT Winter XL PT L \$1.10 to \$1.28, XL and L \$1.14 to \$1.18. Canada XL PT L Spring \$1.34 to \$1.84, XL and S Spring \$1.26 to \$1.58 and Winter \$1.36.

The company reported seasonable collections of wild mink up to 65 per cent sold through private treaties. Ranges were: YF 1 and No. 2 XDK and DK, XL and L \$34.50, Pale XL and L \$33.50; IPT 11, DK, PT Pale, DL and L \$25 to \$29; L and S \$14.50 to \$19. MKR 1 & No. 2, XDK and DK, XL and L \$38, IPT 11 DK PT Med, XL and L \$31; LS 1 and No. 2 DK PT Pale XL and L \$29.50.

HISTORIC CASTLE RAIDED
CULROSS, Scotland (Reuters)—Jewel thieves have raided forbidding and lonely Dunimarle castle near here, the reputed scene of the murder of Lady MacDuff and her children by agents of MacBath, Scottish king in the Shakespeare tragedy. Valuables and art treasures worth several thousand dollars were stolen.

QUEER BIRD
The umbrella bird of Ecuador has a heavy crest which it can spread like an umbrella.

NEWSY NOTES

By J. A. Clark, D.Sc.

MUSKIEG

"That spongy conglomeration of vegetable matter that carpets the Northland" is the description given of the muskieg that had to be stripped from most of the 358 miles of right of way for the railway that is to bring "Iron ore in '54" from Labrador. It was the Geological Survey of Canada report of 1886, J. B. Tyrrell describes the muskiegs he found as follows: "Between these ridges are wide, marshy tracts, either covered with moss and forming impassable muskiegs, or bearing a thick growth of spruce and larch. Another description states that a muskieg is: "A rocky basin filled with successive deposits of unstable materials as leaves, muck and moss, incapable of sustaining much weight, hence a large mudhole."

In letters, the late Dr. Jeremiah S. Clark, when a missionary at Fairford, in northern Manitoba, used to write concerning his four methods of travel in that country: When walking, he would at times sink in muskieg to his knees; when riding his Indian pony and it got stuck in a muskieg, he would get off, get the pony turned round, and work it back to solid ground, when following an Indian trail with his team of ponies in a buck-board, and the ponies became mired in a muskieg, he would unhitch them, and ride one of them to get assistance from the Indians to get his carriage out. Travelling was a very slow process, except in winter, when with his dog-team

he could make good time along the trails and over the frozen muskieg.

The great muskieg belt of this country stretches throughout the limitless North from the Peace River Area, famous for its wheat, to Akkik at the mouth of Mackenzie River and from the Rocky Mountains to Hudson Bay, and on to the shore of Labrador. It is said that Jacques Cartier, in his explorations north of the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, called that country of rock and muskieg: "The land God gave to Cain."

Men searching for oil in the Peace River exploration district have said that the country consists of: "Muskieg and mountains, and muskieg and rivers, and muskieg and forests, and — muskieg." This great area covers hundreds of thousands of square miles. It really has only a southern boundary, and extends from the Lesser Slave Lake in Central Alberta, west and north through vast uncharted expanses, including parts of British Columbia, Alberta, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

To the field geologists who have worked in that area for about 20 years, the muskieg is just another of "Nature's booby-traps," they travel mostly on foot, and get around and over muskiegs as they do the mountains, rivers, lakes, streams and other obstacles. Their work has been a preliminary search of the area for what-

ever it may contain, and has been largely along the river valleys and in the foothills.

The geophysicists find the muskieg a constant obstacle, because their search requires the use of such equipment as seismographs, gravimeters and magnetometers which they must take with them throughout the vast territory they must explore to obtain secrets from the earth. They have to search all kinds of country and work continuously through most of the year.

It is, however, the oil drilling crews, who make sure that oil is or is not present, because "oil is where you find it," that find the muskiegs their greatest obstacle. They know that the muskieg will completely stop their work for long periods. They use very heavy equipment and require immense quantities of supplies, which can be moved over the muskieg only in January and February each year, when the ground and the muskiegs are frozen solid with temperatures that sometimes reach 55 degrees below zero F.

These oil men have cleared with bulldozers from the Peace River exploration district 40,000 miles of northern winter roads, that extend even beyond the hunters' and trappers' horizons. In this work, some time ago, a big tractor simply disappeared into a muskieg. These oil seekers are hardy, inventive men; they observed that the jack rabbit, with his light weight and large feet, can stand or travel on top of the muskieg. A man's weight, his feet, lets him down in the muskieg unless he keeps moving. They modified the army "weasels" that were designed for moving supplies over muddy or

swampy ground; and developed the "muskieg crawler," which has the lowest weight to road surface ratio, of anything tried in the north.

The airplane and the helicopter are the most important means used to lessen the handicap caused by the muskieg in connection with the hunt for oil and minerals in Canada's Northland. Today the mail and supplies come to many camps, vertically from the sky, by helicopter, regularly on schedule. The airplanes bypass the muskieg and great stretches of unknown areas that have not shown indications of being of value, and take supplies and mail to air strips near bush clearings. Others, equipped with pontoons, land supplies on lakes and rivers in summer, or ski equipped, land passengers and supplies on ice in winter.

The two-way radio, with control towers at Peace River and at other points on the Cinshaw Highway, maintains communication with working crews on a 24-hour basis. Every field group has a special, compact, 10-pound two-way radio set. The value of these different services was demonstrated last summer, when a worker in an isolated area was injured. His crew reported the accident to the Peace River control tower which contacted the nearest helicopter, which picked up the injured man and took him to Steen River, where they had a Beaver airplane waiting, so that in two hours from the time he was hurt, he was receiving treatment in a hospital in Peace River.

OTTAWA, (CP)—Cheque cashing in Canada, an indication of business activity, rose up to \$13,107,000,000 in March, a high for the month and up six per cent

**Ships and Planes
Join In Search**

HALIFAX, (CP)—The search continues today for a missing Royal Canadian Navy Avenger aircraft with four aboard that disappeared in the waters of southern Nova Scotia Thursday.

Naval officials said that 13 ships along with naval and air force planes were in the search area this morning. Reports from the search leader, the destroyer Algonquin, said visibility is good and the ocean calm.

The search will continue Sunday, if necessary, but weather reports forecast rain and lowering visibility Sunday afternoon.

The Algonquin, along with the frigates Lauzon, Toronto and Prestonian, was scheduled to arrive here Sunday completing a three-month cruise in West Indian waters. Their arrival has now been postponed "indefinitely."

Naval technicians are still examining the contaminated fuel of the other five planes that were with the missing Avenger on the flight from Bermuda to Summerside. The planes were grounded Friday when sandy particles were found in one of the planes gas filters.

The four men aboard the Avenger were:

Sub-Lt. James D. Holden, 27, of Minnedosa, Man.; Sub-Lt. Robert H. Jones, 24, of Regina; Sub-Lt. John A. MacLeod, 22, of Ripley, Ont., and Petty Officer John E. White of Summerside.

from \$12,331,000,000 in March last year, the bureau of statistics reported Friday.

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