TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox And Mink Farming

A six inch two-column ad in the largest Women's Wear Daily, New York, emphasizes fox furs. It is just another sign that foxes are on the way back— Women's Wear Daily has this also: Double tiered stoles and little capelets stand out conspicuously among the fashions in fox which are meeting the strongest buyer acceptance at Gruskin and Feldmans, Inc. The current revival of long-haired furs is said to be giving such a boost to fox here that the firm reports it is witnessing one of the best ordered seasons it ever had. Norwegian blue fox is rated number one and is advancing all the time. Black fox was never better and white fox is bigger than it has ever been Most successful styles on order are stoles worked in double tiers with or without centre stripping of silk taffeta. These come in varied lengths, the shorter ending in rounded pockets. Boas though not as new are also popular, especially in black fox. Capelets and shoulder warmers are said to be registering successfully in smaller pieces for evening wear. It is here that white fox makes its big stand. One top number is a pert cape of white moire taffeta with tiny collar and button closing prepared with white fox. Also important in the capelet category are elegant styles with detachable tie closings.

In the novelty colored foxes that the firm is also featuring azure blue is moving best in small one-skin shoulder pieces. And still going strong are muffs, first in black followed by white and Norwegian blue fox.

A dispatch from the Norwegian Information Service, Oslo, has the following: Norwegian fur farming is slumping with losses sustained on fox pelts being paid for by profits on Mink. J. R. Lindstrom, Director Norwegian Fur Farms Association, estimated the production of mink pelts will be about 200,000 this year with most of the pelts slated for export, dropped sharply since World War II ended due to low prices which causes losses on each pelt. At present he estimated there are about 60,000 silver foxes, 40,000 blue foxes and 4,000 platinum foxes compared with about 500,000 foxes in 1939. Mr. Lindstrom reported that the price of brown standard mink has dropped due to a lagging demand. Norway has about 4,000 fur farms compared to 21,000 in 1930, but the present farms are larger than the pre-war farms.

A modest attendance composed practically of Canadian dealers was present at the Canadian Fur Auction Sales Company (Quebec) Ltd., at Montreal last week. Offerings were slender with the exception of beaver and muskrat which were average. The absence of New York buyers was noticeable. Wild mink was the opening offering and was moderately bought, top prices being $19.50 to $27.00 for one part 2 XL part dark. Ranch mink (931) was nibbled at by Canadians and reached a top of 19.50 for one part 2 XL dark males and $11.50 to $11.75 for females. For one part 2 dark males $17.50 was paid. Mutation mink (669) was a mixed collection of good quality pastels sold at $18.00; platinums $17.50 to $20.50 and gunmetal males $19. Several lots of low grade mink were withdrawn Beaver, 10,931 was a fairly representative collection but did not exceed large buyer interest. The range for 1 part 2 XL was $15.75 to 23.50. Muskrat (78,553) was a fairly extensive range but the quality did not equal recent offerings, although mostly spring it did not reach $2., the top price being $1.85. Only a few Americans attended and they participated in the buying.

Sam Gottesfeldt, one of the keenest judges of the American fur markets, believes that from now on the fur business will be better and he states this is also the opinion of a number of trade leaders who based their opinions on the past performance in the winter months and on their belief that recent promotional activities will begin to pay off when cold weather arrives. In the past several years the strongest retail selling months of the season have been November, December, January and February. There is no reason why this should not also be the case this season. The best barometer of retail month by month fur volume is the excise tax collection figures of the Internal Revenue Bureau. On the basis of these figures it is estimated that about 45 per cent of last year's retail fur volume was done in November, December and January. With weather conditions this season so far regarded as the worst in many years for fur selling, market observers are confident that the greatest pent-up demand in many years may be released starting next month and continuing through January and February.

The 23rd annual live fox show and 6th annual live mink show will be held in the fox pavilion at the Charlottetown Driving Park November 24th to 27th. It will be under the auspices of the Prince Edward Island Fur Breeders' Association. The program is as follows: Tuesday, Nov. 24, Receiving foxes. Wednesday, Nov. 25, Judging foxes, opens 9.00 a.m., continues throughout the day. Mink received. Thursday, Nov. 26, judging foxes until completed. Mink judging to commence on Thursday on completion of fox judging. Friday, Nov. 27, completion of judging. The foxes must be in their places on Tuesday, Nov. 24. Mink must be in their places on Wednesday afternoon, Nov. 26.

Exhibitors will be responsible for their own classification but any foxes obviously out of class will be removed when foxes are placed on the table for judging. Adult foxes must be registered in Canadian National Records for foxes in the name of the exhibitor. All entries must be in the hands of Secretary W. R. Shaw, on Nov. 14. This is important and is necessary in order to allocate space. An entry fee of $1. per fox and 50c per mink will be charged and must accompany each application for entry. Classes for foxes are medium, light medium, light and extra light silvers. Standard pearl platinums, light, medium and extra light. Standard platinums, medium and light. Divisions are adult male, adult female, pup male, pup female. The judge of foxes will be Douglas Bell, Cape Traverse; the judge for mink, John Malony of Hudson's Bay Company, Montreal.

One of the most prominent fox ranchers of Prince County passed away early last week in the person of W. B. MacArthur, Kensington. Mr. MacArthur made a success of foxes as he made a success of everything he undertook and in the late 1920's and 1930's he was producing some of the world's best. He had an eye for quality and color and foxes exhibited by him won championships at fox shows including the Royal Winter Fair. He maintained his herd until the industry got to such a point that it did not pay to grow foxes. He was also an excellent farmer and a good sportsman, having for many years owned some of the best race horses in the Maritimes including the celebrated trotting mare Miss Belle Rico 2.16¼, that he brought here from the United States. Through his influence many other ranchers in this province benefited in the production of better foxes and harness horse racing got a great impetus because of his example and enthusiasm. He died at the good age of 67 respected by all and mourned by many. On behalf of ourselves and other fur farmers we extend our deepest sympathy to his family.

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-NEWSY NOTES-

By J. A. Clark, D.Sc.

TRAIL CHEMICAL FERTILIZERS

The discoveries that led to the development of modern fertilizer plants at Trail and Kimberley, British Columbia, and at Calgary, Alberta, came largely as scientists tried to overcome smelting problems that produced great quantities of poisonous gas. These fumes, which consisted largely of sulphur dioxide gas, destroyed vegetation in the neighbourhood of Trail. In summer, the prevailing northerly winds carried these lethal gasses south across the international border and down the Columbia River as far as the tree-fruit areas of Wenatchee, Washington.

These fumes were injurious to people as well as destructive to field crops, gardens, house plants and even mature trees. Not only did they destroy vegetation over large areas, but they attacked metals, destroying wire fences and rusting nail heads so that buildings collapsed. Many actions for damages were entered against the Consolidated Mining and smelting Co., and compensation was paid to those who suffered. Before a solution was discovered, the problem was creating an international incident.

The famous Sullivan mine is at Kimberley, B. C. It contains astronomical quantities of metals in wide veins. An accidental discovery of an outcrop of galena, (lead sulphide) was made in 1892 by Walter Burchett, Pat Sullivan, Ed. Smith and John Cleaver near Kimberley. Existing methods of separating and refining the complex ores present, were such that they had small commercial value at that time and the partners soon sold their claims. Of these prospectors who discovered the lode, three have disappeared. The Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company accidently located Walter Burchett in 1943, and have retained him as a member of the engineering staff.

During the year 1900 a few hundred tons of ore were shipped from the mine to Nelson and Trail where the Canadian Smelting Works recovered quantities of lead and silver, but were unable to refine zinc. The price of silver and lead had advanced by 1902, and a smelter was constructed at Kimberley that in five years smelted 75,000 tons of ore. The difficulties encountered in refining ore resulted in the smelter being closed in 1907, and sold in 1910 to the Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company, who under an option purchased the Sullivan Mine. This subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company was unable to smelt profitably and transport the complex ores 200 miles to Trail, B. C.

The company's expert scientists worked for ten years in an endeavour to separate the various metals present from each other and from worthless rock. They realized that in the mine there were millions of tons of metals including: Copper, zinc, lead, antimony, sulphur, arsenic, gold, silver, tin, bismuth, cadmium and some mercury, worth untold wealth; but the metals were so mixed as to be unobtainable by any method then in use. The metals clung together, even when ground into the finest dust, so that they were commercially valueless.

A solution was discovered in 1920, known as "differential flotation," that proved to be almost as simple as separating cream from milk. Its success depends upon the densities of the different elements and compounds. Lead and zinc were literally skimmed off from the finely ground ore and water to which small amounts of catalysts had been added. An experimental plant worked for three years at Trail with this type of concentrator. Then an enlarged one was built near the mine at Kimberley with a capacity of 8,500 tons daily, and only concentrates were then shipped the 200 miles by rail to Trail.

* * *

The ores of the Sullivan mine contain among other compounds: Lead sulphide, zinc iron sulphide, iron sulphide and tin oxide. About ten thousand tons of concentrated ore are shipped weekly from Kimberley to Trail for Smelting and refining. The coal burning smelter fumes were purified by filtering and cleaning them of their poisonous impurities by six sulphuric acid plants. In this process, the byproduct, sulphuric acid, is produced at the rate of 1,200 tons per day. It was found to be impossible, thirty years ago, to market such quantities of this acid profitably.

The research scientists offered the solution by showing how this poisonous acid could be used right there, to manufacture valuable and beneficial plant foods, including both nitrates and phosphates, so essential in producing increased yield of farm crops. The commercial inorganic fertilizer, ammonia sulphate, is made by treating ammonia with sulphuric acid. Ammonia consists of hydrogen and nitrogen. (Its symbol is N. H. 4). The air contains 79% of nitrogen, giving an unlimited, convenient supply of that element. The hydrogen used in making ammonia is obtained by electrolysis from water, H2O.

The company secures its electric power from the Kootenay River; its subsidiary, West Kootenay Power and Light, generate nearly a million horsepower. In the company's hydrogen plant alone, it uses as much electric current as is used in the city of Vancouver. Thus by combining nitrogen from the air with hydrogen from water, they produced ammonia, which, when treated with sulphuric acid, made ammonia sulphate.

Sulphuric acid was also used to treat phosphoric rock, obtained in quantities up to 250,000 tons per year from Montana, by rail. This treatment produced phosphoric acid, which, when partially neutralized, produced ammonia phosphate. This is a concentrated fertilizer, 11-48-0, containing 11% nitrogen and 48% phosphorus pentoxide. They also produce ammonia nitrate, a still more highly concentrated fertilizer. The company built another nitrogen plant at Calgary, and it is estimated that the farmers of the Prairie Provinces, by using nitrates and phosphates produced from air, water and rocks increased the harvest by 36 million bushels of grain.

The poisonous fumes that were collected to purify the atmosphere led to the development of the fertilizer plant, that, once a sideline, now rivals in size and value the smelter and its products.

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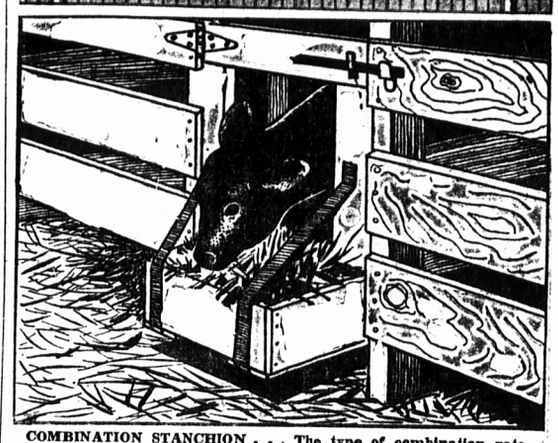

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