

TIMELY NOTES ON FUR TOPICS

In the mail this week we received a letter from Fred P. Newson, Edmonton, Alberta. Fred will be remembered by many here when he was in partnership in the furniture business with his father in the Cameron Block. Like many others he caught the Western fever and ended up in Edmonton where he is one of the most prominent businessmen there and highly respected. Knowing how interested we were in silver foxes he sent us the following which appeared in an Edmonton journal.

Pelting out of the last foxes on the Montgomery Fur Farm at Wetaskiwin in December marked the end of the once booming fox ranching era in Alberta.

Doug Montgomery, grandson of one of the Montgomery Brothers who founded the farm in 1921, is shown in the photo with the final shipment of fox pelts coming from his family's ranch, the last of Alberta's once numerous fox farms. The shipment of about 4,000 pelts was consigned early this month to the raw fur department of the Hudson's Bay Company in Edmonton for trans-shipment to their auction market in Montreal. At the peak of the ranch-bred fur market in 1937, this shipment would have brought about \$20,000; now it is expected to fetch about 15 per cent of that or about \$3,000.

IN ALBERTA

Alberta fox ranching hit its peak in 1945-46 when 29,427 foxes of all types were raised at some 283 ranches. Fickle tastes of fashion-conscious women turned the tide to short fur styles and by 1948 fox farming was fading from the economic scene. In succeeding years several ranchers hung on to their breeding stock, hoping for a fox fur comeback which never materialized. Foxes on Alberta fur farms have been replaced largely by mink and to some extent by chinchilla. Figures for 1955-56 show that 639 fur farms licenses were issued, with mink raisers predominating. Standard and mutation mink pelted in the same period numbered 142,792, valued at \$2,638,384; 414 chinchilla pelts brought \$8,280.

The writer was well acquainted with Frank Montgomery, one of the Montgomery brothers who founded the above ranch, and remembers going out to the John R. Dennis ranch with him in September, 1914, to assist in the selection of two pairs of silver black foxes. These foxes had been optioned at \$12,000 a pair in the Spring of that year. They were of a superior breeding and type. The outbreak of war in August that year caused a great slump in the price of foxes and as a result Mr. Montgomery did not pay anything like the above figures for the pups. They with Dalton strain foxes which the Montgomerys had at their home ranch near Summerside formed the nucleus of the Alberta ranch.

FROM SOVIET UNION

France will receive an unspecified number of furs from the Soviet Union as part of a new three-year trade pact signed between

the two nations. Informed French sources claimed the total deal would involve about \$275 million worth of products going in each direction.

Unusual interest in the recent New York Fur Sales was shown by West German merchants. About twelve importers attended the sales. Since the war the trade has made most of its \$90 million annual purchases through the London market. Before the war the German trade bought mainly in Leningrad, London and Leipzig. Frankfurt with about 150 merchants — most of them formerly from Leipzig — has replaced Leipzig as the center of the German fur trade.

Over 40,000 ordinary raw EMBA mink pelts brought prices from firm to 5 per cent up at the New York Auction Company sale held in New York last week. The largest single offering, 25,941 autumn haze was 71 per cent sold. All 80 per cent sold except ceruleans which were 97 per cent sold, and Argenta which was 86 per cent sold. The Company stated that there was a good distribution of buying with some European participation.

A collection of Canadian made fur garments was shown in Miami, Florida, for the first time under Canadian Government sponsorship at the Surf Club February 21, and the following day at Burdines Department store. The show was part of Canada Week in Miami, February 17-23, when stores in Miami have undertaken to incorporate some Canadian displays in their windows. The collection comprised 36 coats, jackets and smaller pieces all in furs of Canadian origin.

The Canadian Fur Auction Sales Company, Ltd. sale opened on Thursday and was continued on Friday. Among the furs offered were 800 fisher, 12,000 ermine, 30,000 Canadian squirrel, 10,000 racoon, 2,000 marten, 500 lynx, 12,000 dark mink and 35,000 mutation mink.

After Ellisberg's Inc. store was robbed recently the firm put out a quarter page ad headed by "Eye on Thief Knows Where to Get Fine Furs." The advertisement called attention to the firm's first "robbery loss" fur sale and explained, "we hope this is our first and last robbery sale." They they gave a list of furs for clearance.

Too Much Suds For The Drains

LONDON (CP)—The haunting theme song of London's borough councils is I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles. But its associations are far from sentimental.

The joint committee of the 29 councils is considering legislation to limit the amount of foaming ingredients in the manufacture of detergents because of the danger of the pipes of apartment buildings getting clogged by excessive suds.

Union Terms Commission For Nfld.

OTTAWA (CP) — A Newfoundland, New Brunswick and westerner have been appointed a royal commission to view the 1949 Terms of Union between Canada and Newfoundland.

Prime Minister St. Laurent announced Friday in the Commons that the commission will comprise Chief Justice John McNaughton of New Brunswick, a former Liberal premier of his province, Chief Justice Sir Albert Walsh of Newfoundland, and Prof. John Deutsch of the University of British Columbia, a native of Quinon, Sask., and former assistant deputy finance minister in the federal government. Chief Justice McNaughton will be chairman.

Establishment of the commission within eight years of union was provided for in the terms under which Newfoundland became the 10th Canadian province April 1, 1949.

Mr. St. Laurent said he expects the commission will hold its first meeting "almost immediately" to plan the course of its hearings.

The commission will inquire into the economic effects of union of Newfoundland. The general aim will be to find out whether Newfoundland is better or worse off in Confederation than it was as a British colony under an appointed commission government.

IHC To Purchase British Tractors

H MILTON (CP) — International Harvester Company of Canada plans to purchase "a large quantity" of tractors from International Harvester of Great Britain for sale in Canada.

R. B. Bradley, president of the Canadian firm, said substantial shipments will arrive within the next few days.

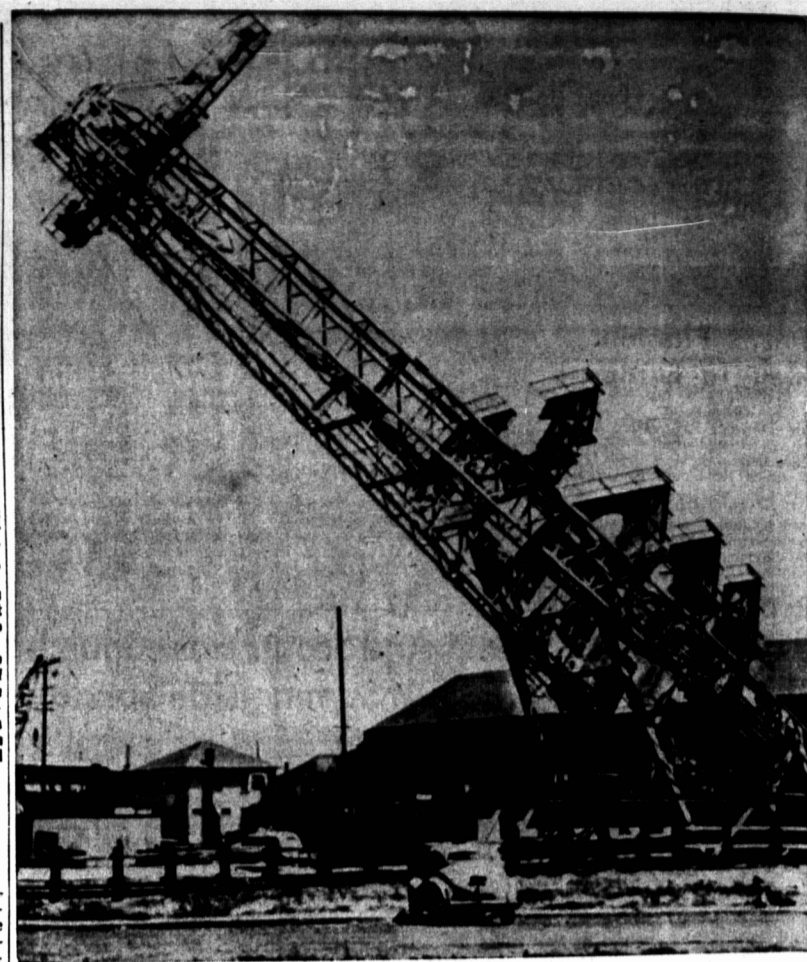
Mr. Bradley's announcement said it is the first time in more than 50 years the company has made large purchases from England of farm tractors and "other machines of types not manufactured in Canada, but suited to Eastern Canadian farming conditions."

Bomb Blasts Army Canteen

NEWRY, Northern Ireland (AP) — Forty northern Ireland territorial army men escaped injury by a few minutes Thursday night when a time bomb destroyed a building where they had been drilling.

The men had gone to a canteen 20 yards away when the blast knocked them from their chairs, rocked the walls and blew in windows of a church 40 yards away.

The territorial camp had been under night and day guard since the outbreak in Northern Ireland of attacks by the Outlawed Irish Republican Army.



NEW GUIDED MISSILE TOWER

OAKLAND, CALIF. — This weird-looking steel tower capable of handling "any guided missile now under consideration" was unveiled here today. Built for the

U.S. Army, the tower normally stands upright, but can be tilted into any position down to horizontal. The 120-foot high tower, weighing 340,000 pounds, will be dis-

assembled and loaded onto a train of 14 freight cars for transfer to Patrick Air Force base near Orlando, Fla., for testing and servicing guided missiles.

Beaverbrook Warns Britain Against European Trade Plan

LONDON (Reuters)—A booklet attacking plans for British participation in a European free trade group and calling for a general election on the issue was published Thursday by Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd.

The booklet said "the life of every man, woman and child in this island will be affected for the worse if the government carries out its intention of linking Britain's economy with Europe."

It said that instead Britain should look toward the Commonwealth and Empire, which has the greatest resources in the world and which offers the world's great-

est market with 640,000,000 customers.

One of the first effects of joining a European free trade scheme would be unemployment in Britain because countries with lower living standards and wage scales would benefit, the booklet said.

It contended that "before this far-reaching and irrevocable change in Britain's trading policy is taken the public should be consulted" by a general election.

Head of Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd. is Lord Beaverbrook, whose papers have consistently attacked the free trade plan and urged closer ties with the Commonwealth.

Ask Separate School Rights In Alberta

EDMONTON (CP)—A resolution asking that separate school rights be granted to a religious minority within any centralized school district has been passed at the annual convention of the French Canadian Association of Alberta.

The two-day convention of delegates represents about 45,000 French Canadians in the province.

The resolution also asks that electors of a local Catholic public school district be granted the privilege of withdrawing from a public school division. The resolution will be presented later to the provincial government.



NEW BRIDGE ICEBOUND

ST. IGNACE, MICH. — Towering above the Straits of Mackinac, the icebound Mackinac Bridge awaits the coming of spring when the final construction season will culminate in the spans opening to

traffic next November. Construction of the bridge, linking Michigan's Upper and Lower Peninsulas for the first time, is largely an amphibious operation and halted by

ice in the Straits during the winter. On shore contractors are pre-assembling huge steel truss sections of the suspended portion of the span.

U. S. Air Defense Forces To Have Atomic Rockets

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States is prepared to use atomic explosions high in the air to blast down any attacking enemy bombers.

The defense department disclosed Wednesday night not only that atomic rockets have been developed for that purpose, but that they have been made available to U.S. air defense forces.

The rockets are designed for firing from jet fighter-interceptors. Nuclear weapons are to be provided later for ground firing from anti-aircraft positions.

The announcement means that the atomic weapons will be stored in some cases near cities, but the department sought to minimize the possible danger from the rockets, both in storage and in

use high in the air.

Defense Secretary Charles Wilson said the weapons "provide by far the most effective form of defense against an air attack." He said they can "destroy aircraft within a considerable distance from the point of burst," meaning no direct hit or near miss is necessary.

In the statement there was a hint that while the atomic rockets now are being distributed only for use in defence of the United States itself, they may be sent outside the country later for defence of perimeters or overseas bases.

Wilson's announcement said the first of such weapons is "an air-to-air rocket launched from interceptor-type aircraft. The rocket now is available in the air defence

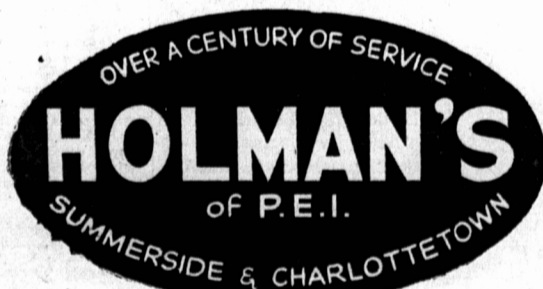
command."

Nuclear warheads also will be incorporated in anti-aircraft missile defences, including the army's Nike-Hercules and navy-air force Talos systems.

An accompanying "fact sheet" said the weapons are being stored in the U.S. where needed for air defence, "in areas immediately adjacent to the operational units."

The defence department declined to say just where the weapons are stored. But it sought to forestall anxiety by saying that tests confirm "the possibility of any nuclear explosion occurring either by impact (apparently something along the lines of a missile falling off a truck or accidentally dropping from a plane) or fire is virtually nonexistent."

Stores of weapons don't emit dangerous radiation to persons living nearby or passing locations where weapons are located, it added.



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