

TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming

Both white marked and platinum fox advanced 10% in average at Lampton, Fraser & Huth's August sale. The Company reported \$49 white marked as 85% sold with a \$19.00 top for large clears; 1,862 platinum were 79% sold with a \$28.75 top for large clears.

We understand that the New York fur merchants held a meeting with government officials in Washington on the Russian importation ban and were told by the government that its hands are tied in the situation. The commerce department suggested that the foreign trade committee of the American Fur Merchants Association attempt to work out some arrangement with the longshoremen and transfer workers. The committee's goods was presented as that of an American citizen who has paid for foreign goods which he cannot obtain. If the ban was the result of a foreign country's maneuver the United States would be able to apply whatever pressure it could muster, but since the move was made by American labor groups the only apparent action would be the use of troops to unload ships—and this drastic step does not appear to be within the realm of possibility, at this time.

The impact of the ban is reflected in import statistics which show that of the total shipments of all Russian goods to the United States in the first half of 1950—valued at \$20,410,000—furs accounted for \$11,118,000, of which more than \$10,000,000 were undressed furs. This is about the same as in 1949 when Russian imports totalled \$42,000,000, of which furs constituted \$23,000,000. Meanwhile signed letters have been sent to Senator Herbert Lehman in which they urge an immediate embargo on shipments of Russian furs.

Previously made in Paris and recently both in Paris and New York, Christian Dior furs will henceforth be manufactured in New York. The main purpose of this move is to relieve the duty payments on furs that are imported by American stores from Paris. Manufacturing Dior furs here will also eliminate the need of sending skins from the United States to Paris to be made into garments there. The Paris and New York collections will continue to be designed in Paris by Dior and two fur shows will still be held yearly in both cities to each separate line. Christian Dior has been the designer of many beau-

tiful furs made from silver and platinum foxes and we trust that the firm will increase the popularity of these types in the United States by the new move. Interest in better furs in Detroit has catapulted mink to the top of the retail selling picture as wild mink led Silverblu and Starlight. Most acceptable coat lengths are 32 to 42 inches. Coat prices are around \$2,500 and \$3,600 as a rule, with some activity in Silverblu and wild at \$1,000 and \$2,000. A large retailer queried on the biggest difference between the customer of 1949 and the customer of today answered—This year they come in to BUY. Mink prices took another upward step last week at the New York Auction Company's sale. It was no surprise to informed persons in the fur market. Just as was anticipated it was due to a combination of factors which had created a bull market in most all furs—ranch mink advanced from July and pastel did likewise compared with June. Selling continued from 9:30 in the morning till eight o'clock in the evening. Seventy-three per cent of the 16,264 standard ranch mink were sold. They described the standard as a fair collection containing some fine strings. It was well completed for with equal strength shown for all types and colors. The firm reported a 20% advance in dark mink compared with the July sale, with a top of \$42.50 for males. Royal pastels dressed, drew very good interest with 89% of the 11,000 skins being taken by the eager buyers. New York said it was a good average collection containing many fine lots and there was a special keen interest in large clear males. Top price in the pastels was \$65 paid for a bundle of skins from the Associated Fur Farmers, New Holstein, Wis. Pastels were reported to be 10 to 12 per cent above the June levels. With so little of the 1949 crop remaining and a three month wait ahead before the 1950 goods come to market, it stands to reason that merchants will be willing to pay more for mink, especially in the current bull market than they were earlier in the season when there was lots of merchandise available. At a gathering of national, regional, state and local fur organizations, representing about 90 per cent of American fur breed-

Cereal Testing In Peace River

Cereal tests at the Experimental Station, Beaverlodge, Alta., show that the recommended varieties of barley and oats range in maturity from 105 to 111 days, wheat from 112 to 115 days, and that the earliest variety of flax, Redwing, matures slightly later than wheat. With the exception of wheat which does not conform to the general maturity-yield relationship, the earlier maturing varieties do not yield as well as the later ones, and the final choice, says A. A. Guitard, will depend to a large extent on the "frostiness" of the immediate locality where they are to be grown.

RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT OF POULTRY OWING TO NEWCASTLE DISEASE

Ottawa, Sept. 1950 — In view of the serious outbreak of Newcastle disease of poultry in British Columbia, it has been deemed necessary under the provisions of the Animal Contagious Diseases Act to take certain steps to safeguard poultry throughout the country. Effective immediately and until further notice no person may import into Canada any poultry, raw poultry carcasses or parts thereof, or poultry eggs. For the purpose of these orders poultry includes chickens, turkeys, pigeons, geese, ducks or other barnyard fowls or other birds raised under domestic conditions. Both of these orders are of a temporary nature and it is hoped that the incidence of the disease may be reduced in the near future to a point where the orders can be modified with safety. Persons gathered to study problems of production and distribution at Portland, Oregon, a resolution was passed that the importation of Russian furs should be handled by the state department and Congress rather than by longshoremen boycott. The fur products labeling act was endorsed by the meeting. It was explained it would protect consumers against misrepresentation and enable fur farmers to know where their products are going. It was voted to put into effect a national research program for the fur farming industry, a per skin tax was voted to cover the cost of studies including nutrition and diseases. It was also decided to conduct a study on the feasibility of putting into effect a national advertising program to fashion minds of consumers. Another study is to be made on the possibility of eliminating as far as possible low grade pelts from the market because they compete with better quality goods and tend to depress the entire price structure.

NEWSY NOTES - By Agricola

THE BLUE-HEADED VIREO This Vireo appears but once in the list of Island birds: it was seen in 1892, by Dwight, an ornithologist, who afterwards published records in "The Auk" of January, 1893. It is often called the "Solitary Vireo," since it prefers deep woods, dark glens and ravines, and avoids the company even of its own kind. This preference has effectively cut out all its Island records for over half a century. It is a tolerably common summer resident in New Brunswick, and quite possibly frequents the woodlands in our southern regions. Its nest, like that of AOU. 624, is pendulous from the fork of a bush or lower tree. Eggs, 4 or 5, white with a few blackish or dark brown spots chiefly at the larger end. Here is Dr. Taverner's description, so that bird-watchers may know what the bird looks like:—Solitary Vireo, Blue-headed Vireo: AOU. 629. Length 5.61 inches. Black greenish shading into bluish-ash on head and adjacent parts of cheeks; white loreal spot and white ring about eye; all underparts white with suffusion of yellow on flanks; wing with two whitish wing-bars. Look out for the bluish head with conspicuous white lore and eyering, and pure white throat. (Lore), a small spot between the eye and the base of the bill.

FRONISSART'S CHRONICLES Jean (or John, Fronissart was born at Valenciennes, France, circa 1937, and began his famous history of the French wars when he had just turned twenty. All his life he treasured in search of information and it is on record that he visited England thrice, (1356, 1361, and 1365), and being a favourite at Court, was knighted. However, he spent most of his time in France where for a time he held some administrative post, and afterwards lived with his patron, the Earl DeBolis, who paid him to complete his history. He died, it is supposed, in 1410. His "Chronicles" of England, France and Spain" were written for the instruction of young people, and they are excellent for the purpose. Sir Walter Scott (no mean judge) was delighted with their dramatic qualities. "The figures live and move before us," he says, "we not only know what they did, but learn the mode and process of the action, and the very words with which it was accompanied." Fronissart's "Chronicles" cover only the reigns of Edward III and Richard II in the space allotted to England, and most of our English histories follow the chronicles very closely. I have sometimes, in these Notes, touched upon the alternation of generations in the human race, and I was interested to find that Fronissart entertained the same belief. Says he, "We must remark a common opinion in England, of which there have been proofs since the time of King Arthur, that between two valiant kings there is always one weak in mind and body; and most true it is that this is apparent in the example of the gallant King Edward, of whom I am now to speak; for his father, King Edward the Second, was weak, unwise, and cowardly, while his grandfather, called the good King Edward the First, was wise and brave, very enterprising, and fortunate in war." Full of interest are the notes he made on the morals and conduct of the various nations he encountered in his travels. His own countrymen were a "subtle race" glad to set other nations by the ears. The Scots come in for much criticism: "they are all thieves, and a very difficult people to get along with." Some French Lords paid a courtesy visit to Scotland and were grievously overcharged in their purchases; moreover, when their servants went out to purchase victuals and forage,

they were permitted to load their pack-horses, but were sure to be waylaid, robbed, beaten and even slain. "In one month the French lost 100 varieties, (servants)." Otherwiser the Scots are said to be bold, wicked and poor, the Germans rude, the Portuguese passionate, and the Spaniards merely "nasty" without any explanation. The Italians are accused of "tearing on the side of the strongest, and shouting, 'The Conqueror forever!'" The English are too haughty, spiteful, and boastful, though it seems they treated him well. One does not hear modern Frenchmen use such adjectives. Andre Maurois charges Englishmen with being fond of nonsense, but enjoyed their company. A Hindoo writer talked of their phlegm or calmness when cornered, and put it down to mental slowness; and so did the American reporter who was queried, as the bombs fell, "What's the matter with these people? Are they numb or just dumb?" To which there was no reply as the work of rescue went on. This seems to be drifting away from Fronissart, so my final word is: get the "Chronicles" and read them yourself. There is more entertainment in them than in many "best sellers" today.

A RARE BIRD I was extremely pleased to have a letter from an old friend:—"Dear Agricola, it is quite a few years since you last heard from me in any line of Nature Study, but I decided to drop you a line today. I am now employed in the Cavendish area of the National Park as Park Warden, and on Friday last I caught a small bird which I knew to be a Sandpiper of some kind. At the time there happened to be present a visitor and his wife who had made ornithology their hobby, and had a good reference book with them. On checking we identified the bird as the Silt Sandpiper, Micropalama himantopus. Its range is usually the Pacific Coast, whence it migrates to South America. It has green legs and differs in its summer and winter plumage. I have your list of birds dated 1936, and this bird may be there under another common name, so I thought I would drop you a line and enquire.

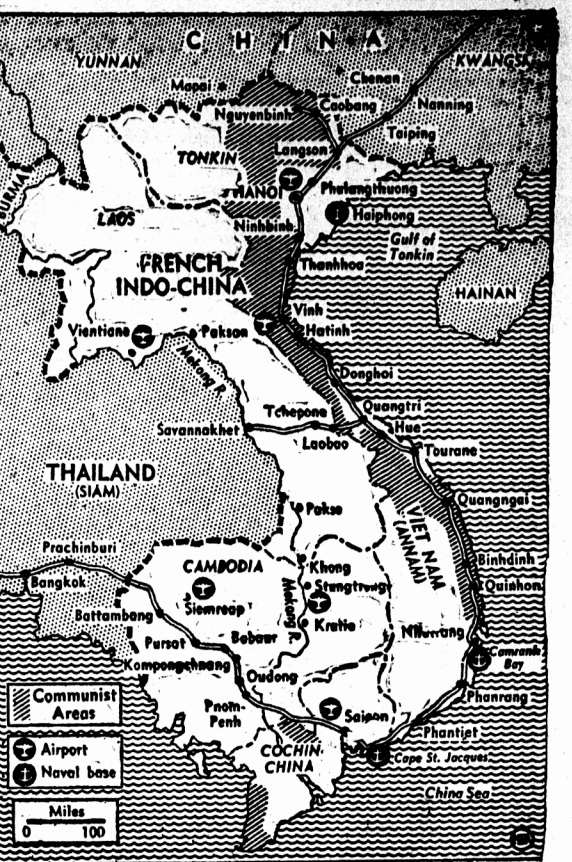
We also have here a great number of Red-winged Black-birds (AOU. 498), nesting in this area. There were also a number at my home in New Glasgow in 1945-46, but have now lost track of them. I must say I always enjoy your columns in The Guardian and have intended to write you for a long time. Sincerely, Sterling Campbell, Cavendish.

No, the Silt Sandpiper is not in any list of Island birds that I have seen, though the N. B. list gives this bird (AOU. 238) as a tolerably common migrant. I have therefore entered the Silt Sandpiper into my records as a "new" bird, credited to Mr. Campbell. The visitors quite evidently had Peterson's "Field Guide to the Birds" a fine work of reference. I thank Mr. Campbell for his kind remarks and venture to ask him for a general report of birds observed, their abundance or scarcity, or other particulars of interest. This would be welcome in early October.

NEW MANUAL OF BOTANY A friend, knowing that I am interested in our native plants, recently brought in his copy of Gray's Manual of Botany, eighth edition, 1960, and kindly left it that I might look it over. The first thing I noticed was the inscription "To — (my friend's name) for much kindness to a complete stranger, from Robert Cameron, Massachusetts." When one sees that the book contains 1632 pages, one can infer something of its costliness. A nice present!

Self-Feeding of Hogs

OTTAWA, Sept. — Self-feeding hogs has become so general now-a-days that feeding in this way has become the accepted method in many districts. This is understandable, for the self-feeder eliminates morning and evening feedings, and so saves time at the busy periods of the day. While the self-feeder requires attention, it need only be a daily one to make sure that feed is available and that no block has occurred in the feed hopper. But self-feeding should not lead to carelessness and neglect of the pigs. It is important to watch the development of the pigs, possibly more so than with hand feeding, and prepare a feed mixture suitable to their growth and condition. To do this, the feed mixture will need to be varied from time to time. In developing feed mixtures for self-feeding, possibly the simplest way is to consider first the feed mixtures used for hand feeding. There are commercial pig starters, pig growers, and pig finishers available, or the operator can mix his own mixtures from home-grown grains along with protein and mineral supplements. When self-feeding such mixtures it is advisable to include more of the bulky feeds such as oats, alfalfa meal or bran. With increased bulk in the ration the pig will still satisfy his appetite, but will consume less of the fattening feeds included in the mixture. Self-feeding of market hogs is suitable for winter or summer, for indoors or outdoors, for dry lot or pasture. In any case, fresh water should always be supplied, preferably running, or from some self-watering device, regularly and frequently filled. Complete information on the self-feeding of swine, suitable feed mixtures and a plan with construction details of a self-feeder are contained in Circular No. 129 "The Self-Feeder for Hogs" which can be obtained free upon request from Information Service, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa.



FAR EAST TROUBLE GROUND—Asia's "rice bowl", strategically located Indo-China, receives more and more attention as the possible object of the Red's next major aggression. Communists already have a head start in the hot, rain-soaked country, where Ho Chi Minh's Viet Nam army has kept 150,000 French troops locked in long and exhausting battle. Now Red China's massive army stands ready to pour into the fight.

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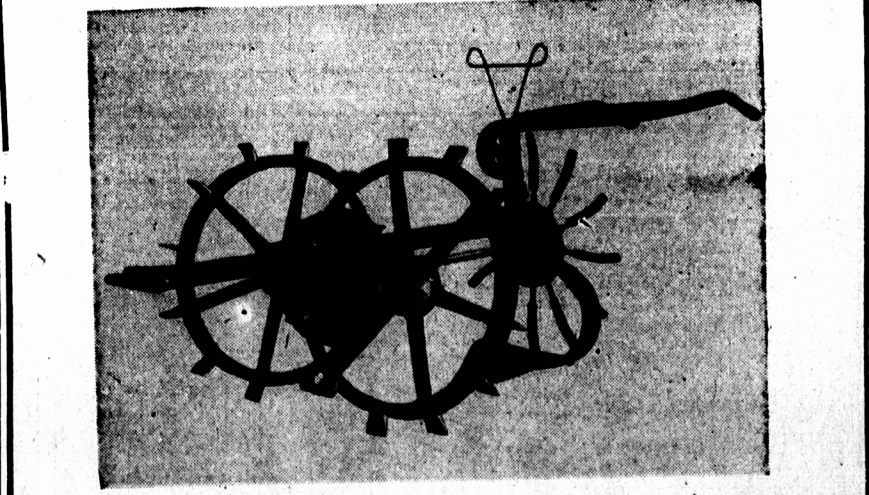
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