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TIMELY NOTES ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH Silver Fox and Mink Farming

The New York auction sale of mutation mink held last week was the strongest of the season with prices firm or higher on all goods offered. Silverblu varieties appeared to be the most wanted with a large proportion of the regular and Breath of Spring types being sold at prices 20 to 25 percent higher than June. All colors were eagerly competed for with some fine goods bringing extremely high prices. A top of \$80 was reached for a lot of Breath of Spring dressed Silverblu. Top regular Silverblu brought \$46. Here is a brief report — dressed goods, Aleutian, 70% sold, top price \$60. for males and females, average quality; white, 73% sold top price \$47; Silverblu (18,033) 93% sold, top price \$46, up 25 percent; Breath of Spring Silverblu \$1% sold top price \$80, prices up 20%; miscellaneous (6,100) 88 percent sold, top price \$32.50.

We notice that in the quantities of furs offered by the Hudson's Bay Company for the auctions in London commencing September 18th, 600 pearl platinum, 1,750 platinum and 15,000 silver fox.

At the Canadian Fur Auction Sales Company, Ltd. September sale we notice that red fox was in much demand with prices 20% above June. These ranged up to \$4.50 for Nova Scotian reds and up to \$4.00 for western Canada reds, and up to \$4.75 for eastern Canada and up to \$7.00 for Labrador. These prices are far in advance of anything paid in the last two years, and the fact that red fox is in demand will be very encouraging to all silver fox breeders because it means a trend towards the long-haired furs. Other long-haired furs that maintained the recent revival and interested New York dealers were lynx, which brought from \$21.00 to \$25.00. White fox was 90% sold, showing very strong demand.

At the above auction many shrewd traders extended their interest in long-haired furs to include silver fox with platinum, regular and inferior buyout and heavily bought by New York and Canadian dealers, also some Europeans. The auction company reported platinum 95% sold with an advance of 25% compared with June and inferior platinum 80% sold at an advance of 22%. The surge of buying mutations continued when pearl platinum and white marked fox were offered. Canadian and European dealers led the bid-

ding favoring top quality but also taking average lots. Pearl platinum sold as high as \$27, with most skins ranging from \$10. to \$18. White marked averaged \$10. to \$14, with a top of \$17 and 99% was sold. The auction company reported platinum well divided between European, Canadian and New York dealers. Pearl platinum was bought for Canada and Europe, White marked, mostly European and Canadian with some New York buying, possibly for export.

One-half to three-quarter silvers which reached a top of \$20.50 were mostly sold between \$14 and \$17. were bought mainly for Europe and Canada but there was some other buying as well. Selected full silvers were very active and strong. Canadians and Europeans were the principal buyers with a near sell out being achieved. Selected fulls brought a top of \$21.50 with average lots at \$15. to \$19. Regular full silvers went mostly to Europe and Canada with prices substantially up. Inferior types were 85% sold to Canadian and Europeans, top price, \$12.50. Concluding the report on the sale Women's Wear Daily, New York, has: "The silver fox sale as a whole was the best in years and appeared to mark the turning point in the attitude of the trade towards an article too long neglected. Many dealers commented that the prices and demand had taken them by surprise."

While the above prices are nothing for us to crow about when the cost of production is borne in mind, yet the fact that the trend towards silver fox and its mutations is being established makes the future very much brighter. We trust that when the first of January rolls around all the silver and mutation fox held in storage in Canada will have been sold. If so the number of pelts available for 1950 will not likely exceed more than 40,000 and these would be a mere drop in the bucket if a substantial demand in Europe and America materializes. The only dark spot in the picture is the possibility that Fromm Bros. and the Niemanns are holding large quantities in cold storage. These, if released in large amount, could keep the market down for another year or more.

A despatch to Women's Wear Daily from Montreal states — Fur industry executives here point out that impact of the increase in excise tax on fur garments, in effect from last Friday throughout Canada, is less severe than at first reading, and is not expected to cause any material upset in fur business. The facts are that the 10 per cent tax imposed at the dressing and dyeing stage is now increased to 15 per cent, under Finance Minister Abbott's supplementary "defence budget." The existing 8 per cent tax levied at manufacturing level, however, remains unchanged.

The overall effect is to increase retail fur prices between 2 and 3 per cent, which means \$10 to \$15 on a \$500 coat, according to an official of the Canadian Council of Fur Associations. Put another way, the effect of the increase is about equal, he says, to a 5 per cent general rise in raw fur prices.

NEWSY NOTES

By Agricolo

THE YELLOW-THROATED VIREO

This Vireo was given as a "summer resident" in the 1916 bulletin, but was afterwards excluded as a case of mistaken identity. However, the bird was observed at Pownall in the summer of 1949, by Miss Maude M. Jones, well-known to readers of this column as an experienced ornithologist. The Vireos without doubt are a different group, but this species, as its name implies, has the throat and breast of a bright yellow color, whereas the other species have these parts white. This feature is very conspicuous.

There are at least half-a-dozen different kinds of Vireo listed for New Brunswick; the Red-eyed, Philadelphia, Warbling, Yellow-throated, Blue-headed, and White-eyed species. The immense forests of that Province give food and shelter to all. The more adventurous spirits in this list will at times cross the Straits, and remain to breed on P. E. I., but the nest, hanging from a twig, is too tempting a mark for robber crow and the mauling grackle. The Vireo is not likely to repeat the experiment. It is these uncertain incursions that confuse our local birdwatchers.

Yellow-throated Vireo. AOU, 628. Occasional summer resident. (Pownall, 1949). Superciliary line, and ring around eye, bright yellow; upper parts bright olive-green, shading to gray on the rump and upper tail coverts; wings with two wing-bars, and with the outer web of inner secondaries white. Throat and breast bright yellow; belly and undertail coverts white. Tail dusky, nearly all the feathers with white edging, and (as in all Vireos) short and slightly notched. Length of adults 6.0 inches.

STORY OF A YELLOW ALFALFA In my garden — now much neglected, I am sorry to say — there is growing a vigorous plant of Medicago falcata, upon which hangs a story.

In March, 1913, the South Dakota State Legislature authorized Dr. N. E. Hansen to explore Siberia in search of wild Alfalfa and Clovers which could stand up against the extreme conditions of drought, heat and cold found on this continent. This was to be his fourth journey into the realms of the Czar and he records with gratitude, the helpfulness and courtesy of the Russian officials with whom he had to deal.

Late summer found Dr. Hansen at Semipalatinsk, where he had landed, on a previous journey, a yellow-flowered Alfalfa (M. falcata) growing abundantly and well. Unlike the blue-flowered European Alfalfa (Medicago sativa) which produces a very long tap-root, this Siberian species produced a multitude of side shoots or "runners". Instead, it is said that the subsoil of the region is always frozen at a depth of six or seven inches, and the plant is therefore "the victim of circumstances" and must run as

It is pointed out that this way the government will, in fact, collect more dollars on taxation of fur garments than even during the war when the tax stood at 25 per cent but there was no additional tax on the manufactured garment. Retailers are not expected to mark up present stocks, but higher retail prices will necessarily be marked on new deliveries which carry the increased tax rate.

advance of education, I suppose the old dialect is dying, if not already dead.

GRAY'S BOTANY, CENTENNIAL EDITION About the middle of last century an English scientist gave vent to his feelings by asserting that technical nomenclature had become so chaotic that though we may know very well what a plant or an insect is, we are by no means certain that the name we give it is that under which it will appear in the next book we open. Too many Canadian botanical treatises come under this censure. The new Gray's Manual of Botany, 8th edition, happily refrains to a great extent, from removing the "ancient landmarks."

There is one change, however, that is no improvement: our Beach Pea, Lathyrus Maritimus, is now called L. Japonicus. Why? It is found in England as well as in Arctic and Northern Europe, Asia, and America. It the Japanese plant has any difference, then it should be L. maritimus, variety Japonicus.

The Manual (apart from this), is an excellent work and well worth the attention of botanists over all the continent. Every form and variety of plant has been noticed under the specific name, and many illustrations have been added to those of the seventh edition. There are other features of this monumental work that deserve mention, but these must wait.

Three years later, F. M. Sclanders, of Saskatoon, Sask., wrote: "My own experience with Hansen's alfalfa leads me to look upon it as the most important agricultural innovation for very many years." With all its good points the Siberian Alfalfa should have achieved success, but, instead, it gradually dropped out of sight. At that time most of the Stations and Agricultural Colleges in Canada were trying to produce hardy hybrids of the European Blue Alfalfa, and discouraged the growing of any others. It was pointed out that the leaves of Hansen's Alfalfa were smaller than those of the European species. True, but there were more of them, so that, in general, each plant yielded 8 to 10 lbs. of green forage. But the word "hybrid" had a marvellous effect, and my plant is likely to be one of the last survivors of the once famous Hansen's Alfalfa.

GIRDLE OR GRIDDLE There is an interesting (and at times, amusing), discussion going on in the columns of a popular weekly, as to whether it is allowable to use the word girdle, when griddle is meant. Can we say "girdle-cake", when the cake is baked on a griddle? The most erudite dictionaries have been consulted, but so far none of the disputants seem satisfied. Everyman's Dictionary disposes of the question in five words:—"Girdle, Scots form of Griddle." It is not only the Lowland Scots who enjoy girdle-cake, but their erstwhile foes, the Northumbrians, have evolved several luscious varieties of that comestible.

The weakness of the disputants is that they have not heard of metathesis, which concerns itself with the transposition of letters. Here are a few examples: The old English word "bridd" is now printed "bird". The Scots (and their foes) say "he grined at us" when they mean "he grinned malevolently." "The cake was brunt" when it was merely burnt. There was a little river that ran past the old Roman Camp at Lanchester, County Durham, and was called "the Brownie". I questioned a wise old naturalist who told me that it was the word "born" with the diminutive — "ie" attached. Then the letter "r" was moved up to make it "Brunle". As the language became more elegant, the vowel was altered to its present form. Burn, in this instance, means a stream or brook.

In Northumberland County, England, the older people talked of "gordle" cake, "gorn" for grin and sometimes said "born" for brunt. With the march of time, and the

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11. Conscious
16. Rude dwelling
21. Dash of spirits added to a beverage
26. Frozen water
31. Situated on the right hand
36. Antagonistic
41. Delay
46. Son of Noah
51. Coffee shop
56. Unrelenting
61. African gazelle
66. Ventures
71. Paused
76. One of the Bears (Astron.)
81. Consume
86. Small bottle
91. Stucco for regulating water
96. Franks
101. American author
106. Arrange in a line
111. Strain
116. Intended
121. Pale
DOWN
1. Stylish
2. Crazy
3. Baking chamber
4. Norse god
5. Any powerful deity
6. Caution
7. Region
8. Cliché
9. Division of a play
10. Arched ceiling
11. Young hare
12. Presses with insistence
13. Like
14. Founder of Pennsylvania
15. Brightly-colored fish
16. Small bay
17. Sharp
18. Moving part (Mech.)
19. Malt beverage
20. Brain covering
21. Exclamation (abbr.)
Yesterday's Answer
41. Malt beverage
2. Brain covering
46. Exclamation (abbr.)
46. East by south (abbr.)
DAILY CRYPTOQUOTE—Here's how to work it:
A X Y D L B A A X E
L O N G F E L L O
One letter simply stands for another. In this example A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.
A Cryptogram Quotation
S W L E U A K L S A U G M A V M Q W U K X Y U
M R I P H U S W L E U A K H F P M K U I U R
R U J U A V R U E — Q M A P M G
Yesterday's Cryptogram: NIGHT BRINGS OUT STARS AS BORROWS SHOW US TRUTHS—BAILY.
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