

THE SILVER FOX INDUSTRY



Dr. Alexander Ross

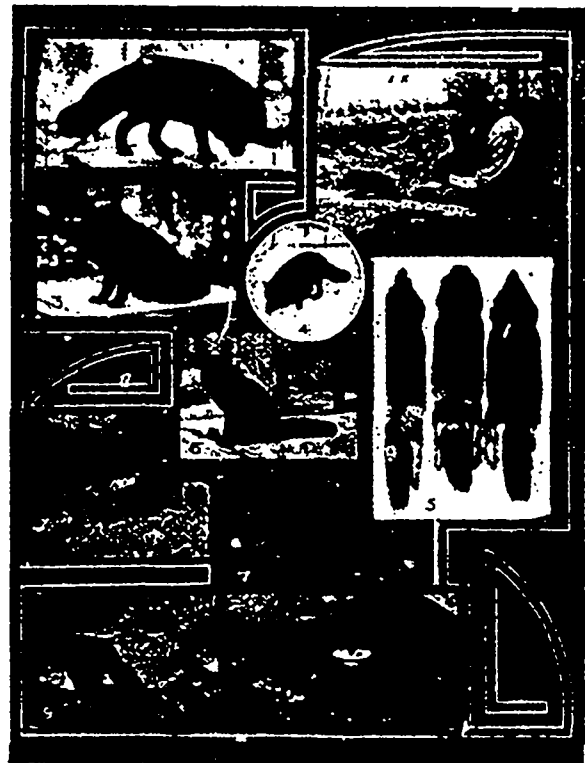
It is foreign to the purpose of this article to deal with the first and third periods which have been dealt with on a number of occasions by various writers.

What the pioneers accomplished during the second period and the fact that they made a large amount of money during that time, from the sale of pelts alone, is the true foundation of the whole business.

The writer of this article had many unique opportunities of observing what those pioneer fox breeders accomplished from 1898 to 1909. He practised as a physician for a number of years at Alberton, P. E. I., the cradle of the silver fox breeding industry. Besides the intimacy that a trusted family physician brings, he was consulted on many occasions, upon many problems which these men were called upon to solve; this at a time when the greatest secrecy prevailed and the industry was surrounded by a mystic halo. The evidence he is able to give is first hand for he was on the spot to observe things which were then unknown to the outside world. Without going into details he saw mortgages being paid off, new houses with all modern conveniences being built. He saw all those pioneers surrounding themselves with many luxuries which only the rich could afford. In short he saw men who were hitherto in very ordinary circumstances in a few years become rich. Besides accumulating a number of prime silver foxes he knew each of them to have a comfortable bank account. They did not make the great fortunes that some have made in the last four years, but the fact remains that during twelve years, from the sale of pelts only, year after year, they made a steady and rapid advance from comparatively small means, to wealth. There is no other industry, certainly none here, in which, with such a small outlay and so little money tied up in a manufacturing plant, such a result could or can be achieved as these men obtained.

Like many men of limited education and narrow outlook they thought to keep a monopoly of this great and profitable industry in their own hands by refusing to sell any live animals for breeding purposes to outsiders. Though there were three rival camps, between whom the greatest jealousy existed, for twelve years they stuck to this resolution not to sell live animals. At last, however, so many facts leaked out as to the amount of money they were making that two or three times the price of the pelts was offered them, and in 1909 they yielded to the temptation to sell live animals.

Then the flood gates were opened and prices of live foxes went up with a bound so that a slump was bound to come. These towering prices were doing the industry an incalculable amount of harm in the minds of financial men who regarded the whole thing as a wild-cat scheme to gull the unwary. But, after all, as happens in the infancy of every industry of great possibilities, this was but a passing episode, and, with the foundations now so well laid and with the greater knowledge of breeding these animals in captivity than the pioneers possessed, there is no doubt that greater results than ever will be achieved.



Interesting Views of the Fox Industry

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A holiday by the sea shore is the form of vacation most appreciated by thousands of people from the inland centres. Prince Edward Island abounds with attractions to suit all tastes from the quiet retirement of a sea-side village or a well appointed farm home to the busy, active, modern city with its many opportunities for amusement and entertainment.