

THE SILVER FOX INDUSTRY

RANCH CONSTRUCTION

(a) LOCATION.

The first consideration in locating a fox ranch (provided climatic conditions are suitable for the production of fur) is a desirable growth of mixed hardwood and fir, with a Southern exposure; the land, preferably, having a gentle slope to the South where possible.

This permits of having:—

- 1st—Natural surroundings for the foxes, who inhabit and roam through the woods in their wild state.
- 2nd—Mixed hardwood allows the sun to enter the ranch in the spring when it is most desirable that the snow should be melted away from the ranch and the ground dry up early. When young pups first come out, they have the benefit of the warm sun and protection from the cold North and Northeast winds. As the weather grows warmer, trees but forth leaves that furnish shade from hot sun, and at the same time, permit circulation of air through the ranch.
- 3rd—The reason for sloping ground is that it affords drainage when the snow begins to melt. If the ground is too flat, the water collects in the middle of the pen where the snow is tramped down hardest by the foxes. With the proper slope, drains may be cut through the snow to permit of drainage from the early freshets.
- 4th—A good growth of wood affords the foxes protection from prying eyes of curious persons and should be sufficiently removed from highways of travel so that the foxes will not be disturbed by the noise of traffic and the sound of strange voices. This is particularly desirable on account of the highly sensitive nature of female foxes at the time of giving birth to their off-spring. Strange and unusual sounds sometimes throw the female into a panic which results in the loss of her litter, through her efforts to carry her pups to a place of seclusion.

(b) SUITABLE SPACE.

The size of pens constructed by different fox ranchers varies considerably; one of the chief consideration being, in the case of building