

stated that the "silver" derives its name from the silvery band or tip on its hairs which, when blended together, make it so responsive to the eye. Prime pelts are graded and marketed as full, three-quarter, half, medium, quarter and one-eighth silvers, black and dark black. The origin of this animal can be traced to the enterprising efforts of two Western Prince County farmers of limited means who experimented in the breeding and inbreeding of the native red and black fox in captivity. Their early efforts were shrouded in secrecy but increasing demands for their stock focused attention on them and prices soared to catapult their humble savings into sums of astronomical proportions.

With sales reaching the tens of thousands of dollars the industry fell prey to many and varied schemes. Joint stock companies were formed which for the most part had the industry's development at heart but others of more questionable origin only sought quick returns and "milked" the public accordingly. Even legitimate concerns were victimized by dishonest employees who were given to outright stealing or clandestinely switching stock from ranch to ranch.

Another scheme entered into by the unwary was the purchase of options on unborn pups—these options in turn being sold and resold, either outright or on a share basis, with identity and ownership being lost within reams of official looking documents.

Like many other mammals the fox will devour its young when unduly disturbed and this excuse was played on to the limit by managements, both honest and otherwise, to keep inquisitive persons and others from entering and interfering with their operations. With secrecy surrounding all ranches, one can well imagine the reception the Police received when seeking information.

The extent to which phoney operators were prepared to extend themselves can

best be described by the experience of one of their agents. This agent, a resident of New York was induced to visit P.E.I. to promote a fox ranching company and while there was taken over snow-drifted roads to the ranch property to see for himself—he did—but all he got was a fleeting glimpse of a four legged animal burying itself in the snow, which was described to him as being their prize female. On the strength of this single glimpse the company opened luxurious promotional offices in Montreal and proceeded to offer stock to the public. All went well at "Head Office" until the agent's commissions started to fade and he resorted to selling "escrowed stock" which not only brought about the displeasure of the management but the downfall of the company.

This unhealthy situation within the industry could do nothing but serve to attract the unscrupulous, resulting in legitimate companies taking drastic steps to right matters and so it was that such an institution as the Canadian National Silver Fox Breeders Association came into existence. In addition to this protective association fur pools were formed whose principal concern was the marketing of furs. To the C.N.S.F.B.A., I believe, we can attribute the initiation of the ear tattooing system, presently in vogue, whereby positive identification can be established. Although there were instances, as in the Crosby case referred to later, where identification was established through natural markings or blemishes, identification made through tattooing far outweighs any other consideration.

Despite the readiness with which foxes can be tattooed many ranchers maintained unmarked stock, therefore means had to be sought to gain knowledge of ranches, holdings, and so forth. To this end the Provincial Government was approached on several occasions for legislation making it a compulsory requirement for ranchers to submit and maintain an