

**Commission of Conservation  
CANADA**

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**Canada's Need**

"What is the need of Canada at the present time? We have a great debt in this country. How are we going to meet it? We are told to produce. We can produce in the factories, on the land, and in the mines of this country. We have great natural resources that only need to be developed in order to enrich this country; and if we could only develop those resources to the extent of one-fourth of their value at the present time we would have no trouble in meeting our obligations as a nation. There is no cause for any person in this country to be discouraged about the future of Canada. All we need to do is to move around this Dominion to realize the great resources we possess; and we cannot help but become prouder of our country and cannot help but glory in the fact that, in Canada, we have as great wealth and as great opportunities as are to be found in any land in the world to-day. What is requisite is to encourage the development of those resources, and, given an opportunity to the people to take advantage of the wealth that is in the country, there will be no need for the Government to worry about the future of Canada and no need for the honest, capable and ambitious citizen of Canada to worry about it either."

-W. A. Buchanan, M.P., in House of Commons.

Halibut to the value of \$100,784 was caught in the northern waters of British Columbia in March, as compared with \$39,787 last year.

In return for certain concessions, a company proposes to bore for oil in Prince Edward Island, spending \$300,000 within the next ten years on operating and development work.

The Dominion Government has segregated Southampton, Mansel and Coats islands, in the northern portion of Hudson bay, as reserves for reindeer and musk ox. These islands are reported to be suitable as to situation and climate and to have sufficient food available.

**Fur Farming**

RAISING SKUNK

In view of the rising prices of furs, all fur-bearing animals capable of being reared in captivity are being made the subject of special study. Many prospective fur-farmers are seeking information regarding the skunk. This animal has not, in Canada, been very extensively or successfully reared in captivity. It has, however, been demonstrated that the farming of skunks is quite feasible. The question is mainly one of adequate returns. With the choicest skins selling at over \$10 apiece, the time would seem to be at hand when skunk raising might be profitably undertaken, though experiment is needed to establish it on a secure commercial basis. A few of the more important facts covering the fur-bearer are summarized below.

**Traits.**—The skunk is neither timid nor vicious and is easily domesticated. The animal is a fairly good burrower, but it is not fond of climbing. Its unsuspicious nature makes it easy to trap. It is generally nocturnal in habit.

**Food.**—Skunks are practically omnivorous. In their wild state, they devour large numbers of insects, including grasshoppers, crickets, beetles and caterpillars. In captivity, they may be given meat, fish, cooked cereals and vegetables and milk. The cheapest way to obtain food would be to arrange with a rubbish hotel to remove the garbage. Putrid or tainted meat should, however, be carefully avoided.

**Breeding.**—Only black or "star black" males should be used for breeding. There may be one male for each half-dozen females. The mating season in Canada would usually be March. The period of gestation is about eight weeks. There are from 6 to 12 in a litter. The young are born blind and nearly naked. They may be weaned when two months old.

**"Descenting."**—The abominable fluid which the skunk uses as a means of defence is contained in two sacs, one on either side of the vent. At about five weeks old, these sacs may be cut out and the animal rendered harmless as a cat. The operation is not absolutely necessary as tame skunks are unlikely to use their scent unless badly frightened by some intruder.

**Pens.**—Wire fences for skunk ranches should be of 1 inch mesh. No 16 gauge, poultry netting, about 3 feet high, with an overhang at the top and sunk 3 feet into the ground at the bottom and then turned inwards. The dens may, in suitable soil, be artificial borrows, which the skunks will adapt to their own requirements. But almost any sort of hole or kennel, so long as it will be dry, will serve.

**Fells.**—The fur of skunks raised in captivity is said to be inferior to that of the wild animals. This has been attributed to lack of exercise. The darker the skin and the shorter and narrower the strips,

the more highly is it esteemed. Careful selection should result in fixing the desirable characteristics. Skunk skins should be "canned" for market. In the trade, the fur is often sold as "sable".

**Reduction of  
Water Charges**

Introduction of Water Meter Reduces Bills of 80 per cent of Consumers

The objections to a meter basis for a water supply as against the antiquated and wasteful flat rate, usually comes from those ignorant of the details of operation and of the distribution of expense in connection with a waterworks system. These individuals often secure the greatest benefits from the change in having water charges based more proportionately on service rendered or the amount of water consumed.

The reduction in consumption effected by meter service is remarkable and the cost of the meters is often more than balanced by the reduction of expenditure for extensions that would otherwise have been necessary.

The difficulties and opposition to be expected in making the change were recently illustrated in a Connecticut city where the Water Commissioners decided to install meters to eliminate the waste. The water consumption had reached 133 gallons per day, per capita; the maximum amount of water available from the existing sources of supply had been reached; another source would have had to be developed at great expense but for the reduction effected by the introduction of meters. The meters reduced the consumption to 78 gallons per capita per day and it is now estimated that the present supply will be adequate for some 20 years.

To quote from the Water Commissioners' report: "The Commissioners immediately brought up on themselves the severest criticism. They persevered in their work, however, although by so doing they incurred much odium and were roundly abused. But experience now shows that their course was fully justified. There has been an enormous reduction in the consumption, and the almost total absence of complaints about water bills during the recent collection indicates that the people are satisfied with the present system."

"It was not the purpose of the meters to compel consumers to stint themselves in the use of water, but to compel the careless consumers to stop avoidable waste and leakage. The discovery and stoppage of hundreds of leaks by the consumers, in co-operation with the water department, has shown that the metering of the services has had the desired effect. Statistics of the November collections from metered services within the city show that 80 per cent of the consumers are paying less than on the flat-rate basis, 18 per cent are paying more, and 2 per cent are paying the same as before".—L. G. Denis.

**A Word of Caution  
About Fur Farming**

Business Still in Experimental Stage—Prospective Fur Farmers Must Be Pioneers

The tenor of inquiries received by the Commission of Conservation indicates that some persons imagine that fur farming is an easy business to undertake. This is a serious mistake. Success in fur farming demands a combination of favourable local conditions, moderate capital, perseverance in the face of difficulty and discouragement, enthusiasm for the work and a sympathetic understanding of wild animals. Fur farming is not as simple as raising chickens and not even everyone who attempts chicken-raising is successful.

The fox has been kept in captivity for some years and it has been demonstrated that it can be successfully and profitably raised. Its habits have been studied and much is definitely known as to its management. But, with regard to other fur-bearers, comparatively little is known, though the right kind of man can achieve success with mink, skunks, muskrat, beaver, etc. He must, however, expect to depend on his own wits and to solve difficulties for himself, without having a store of previous human experience to guide him.

**Protectors of Our  
Forests and Crops**

In a recent test case the State of Missouri challenged the constitutional right of the United States to enforce the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Hon. Mr. Justice Holmes, who delivered the opinion of the U.S. Supreme Court, took a wide vision of modern conditions and requirements. Reciting the objects of the treaty, Justice Holmes said that numerous species of birds, in their annual migrations, traversed many parts of the United States and Canada, that they were of great value as a source of food and in destroying insects injurious to vegetation, but that they were in danger of extermination through lack of adequate protection. After dealing with the authority vested in Congress to enact the legislation he said: "The case before us must be considered in the light of our whole experience, and not merely in that of what was said a hundred years ago; we must consider what this country has become. . . . Here a national interest is involved, nearly the first magnitude is involved. It can be protected only by national action in concert with that of another power. The subject matter is only transitory within the State and has no permanent habitat therein. But for the treaty and the statute there soon might be no birds for any powers to deal with. We see nothing in the Constitution that compels the Government to sit by while a food supply is cut off and the protectors of our forests and crops are destroyed."