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First Blue Fox Farm in This Part of British Columbia is Just South of Porcher Island

Andrew Ness and Associates Make Success of First Season's Operations on Islands in Kitkatla Inlet

(By H. F. Pullen in Sunday Province)

On an island to the south of Porcher Island, in Kitkatla Inlet, forty-seven miles from Prince Rupert, the Ness brothers and one or two partners have close to fifty fine blue foxes which have done well this year and promise to be the nucleus of an important industry.

There are numbers of islands along the coast suited to fox farming, and if all were used for that purpose, the government would get considerable income from taxes and leases, and new industries would be built up that would be a valuable addition to those now on the coast. The cost of starting is not large and all that is needed is ordinary ability and care to make a success of the business.

Here is what the Ness boys are doing: They are the owners of the halibut fishing boat Inez H., a five man boat that they built themselves. This boat goes out to sea past the fox farm and carries supplies and also occasionally leaves offal fish on which to feed the foxes.

The farm occupies three small islands a mile away from any other land. The largest island was purchased from the government and the other two leased. They are seventy-seven acres, fifteen acres and ten acres in extent respectively, and two of them are so close together that they are connected at low tide. On this farm the brothers, Andrew Ness, Harold Ness and another fisherman, Ed. Christensen, placed six pairs of foxes last fall. They were purchased at Hotspur Island, Alaska, for $300 a pair, but as other money was needed the capital subscribed in all was $2,400.

Now Fifty Foxes

From this small beginning the farm has increased in less than a year to close to fifty foxes. Forty young ones sure are accounted for, and it is possible the number may be larger. They have the run of the islands, which are thickly grown with cedar, spruce, hemlock trees and underbrush. Today the young foxes are quite as large as the old ones and they look larger, as the parents have been losing the beautiful fur for which they are famous, whereas the young ones have theirs intact.

Two litters of eleven each were raised, two of seven each and one of six. Next year they expect the litters to be larger, as that is customary the second year. Both male and female parents look after the young, the male carrying food to them regularly and keeping a watchful eye on the brood.

Closely Guard Young

An interesting feature of the care of the parents for their young was seen in one of the litters of eleven. The den where they were born was across the island from the shack where the caretaker lives. Finding there was more food and company nearer the house, the parents made two more dens close to the shack and carried six pups to one and five to the other. The dividing of the litter, it was thought, was due to the fact that the vixen was unable to nurse them all at once, so she would first nurse one group and then go to the other den and nurse them.

The dens are hollowed out from beneath the roots of a big stump. The runways extend for many yards and there are several entrances from different directions, thus insuring a safe exit in case of trouble.

The foxes are fed once a day on cooked food formed of a mixture of oatmeal, bran and meat or fat. Often a hair seal is shot and part of the carcass boiled with the other food. It is estimated by some that about $10 a year will feed a fox, but Ness thinks it may be higher than that, although not more than $15.

The mating season is in February and the young are born about April or May. When a site for a den is selected, the pair selecting the site will not allow intrusion from other foxes, no matter how closely related. They fight vigorously and always win because they have right on their side. One pair last year swam to the small island which is wholly detached from the others and raised their young there. Food had to be taken to them by boat every day.

At low water the foxes forage for themselves along the beaches picking up clams, mussels, crabs and other small creatures. Often they buried these and came back later and dug them up and ate them after they had begun to decompose.

Recently I made a visit to the islands and spent a night there with Andrew Ness. We inspected all the foxes together and took a few photographs, but photos were difficult to get. Although the foxes were tame, they took fright at the slightest rapid movement or peculiar noise and often would not return. They spent a good deal of time playing like kittens, chasing each other along the beach or among the trees and seeming to enjoy life to the full.

Male Always Welcome

Although the youngsters were four months old and as big as the parents, the old male still sometimes brought them food and was always welcomed after being absent for some time. I was watching them early in the morning when the old fox returned, apparently after being away all night. The youngsters dashed up to him and made unmistakable signs of welcome, whimpering, chuckling and squanking and prancing about. He would not allow any undue familiarity, but now and then gave one a slap or growled angrily. Then they desisted at once.

The Ness brothers told me they were just about to put in feed houses for the foxes. This would serve as protection for them during bad weather and also be a means of catching them when necessary. In the runway of each house is a trap door that enables the foxes to be caught without difficulty.

Imitating my host, I tried feeding the foxes bread from my hand. Several of them got quite used to taking it from me. Now and then one would snap and catch my finger, but would always let go without hurting me. They would put their front feet against my body to reach for the bread, but would not allow me or anyone to touch them, and if the camera clicked they were gone like lightning.

Cleanliness Important

Cleanliness, I found, was an important thing in keeping these animals. All cooking utensils and troughs and anything used in connection with their food was kept scrupulously clean. Andrew told me he learned this in Alaska, where he visited a farm and spent a month helping feed the foxes and learning how to do things.

The company this year may sell three pairs of young foxes and keep the remainder. If they start next season with twenty-five pairs and get an average of eight to the pair, by this time next year they will have 200 young foxes in addition to the old ones, but, of course, things may happen and they may not get so many. Also, there is a possibility of getting even more. In any event they should get enough to pay a substantial dividend.

It is thought that next year two men will have to remain on the island permanently, as the work will be increased to such an extent as to be too much for one to handle.

Fur Prime at Christmas

The furs do not prime until Christmas, and then they remain good only for a few weeks. During that time all the pelts required have to be taken. The foxes are killed in a humane manner and all the cruelty of trapping is eliminated. The only difficulty is that the little foxes become so tame and such pets that killing them seems almost wicked.

During the summer Mrs. Ness and family spent a month or so on the farm and became very attached to the little foxes.

Mr. Ness is a Norwegian by birth and came to Canada nineteen years ago. He is now 38 years of age and being tired of fishing, took up this means of livelihood which will do away with the necessity of going to sea. He fished a little during the past summer when his brother was at the farm, and for the last trip to the banks he drew $243 for eight days' work. However, all trips are not like that and the life is a hard one.

Use of Tail

"Why does the fox have that long bushy tail?" I asked Andrew. "He uses it for a rudder when running and turning," was the reply. "Also he seems to use it for defense when getting the worst of a fight. The moment a fox is getting worsted by an opponent, he turns rapidly and switches his tail in the face of the opponent." I watched and found this to be the case. Fighting is one of their amusements, and they are constantly at it. Often half a dozen may be heard squawking at one time and it is a curious noise. Occasionally they bark and they also call each other and have a number of signs and signals.

Undoubtedly there is room for development of the fox farming industry, but it must be taken up with care and must not be left to careless employees. The owner is the man to look after them. He should live on the island or close by.

Ten Years Ago
in Prince Rupert

October 21, 1915.

It is said that timber speculators hold enough timber in the province to keep British Columbia going for 140 years, that enough coal is held by vested interests to last thousands of years and that land speculators hold millions of acres of arable soil.

There are heavy storms in the interior and Prince Rupert was today without telegraphic communication.

With the change in G.T.P. coast steamship service, various of the company boats will have the following officers: Prince Rupert, Captain D. McKenzie; chief officer, A. M. Davies; second officer, Mr. O'Brien; third officer, Neil McLean; Prince John, Captain C. W. Wearmouth; first officer, Harry Nedden; second officer, R. McKenzie; Henriette, Capt. W. S. Moorehouse; first officer, Mr. Scott; second officer, Mr. McKerron.

The steamers Prince George and Prince Albert are being tied up for the winter. Capt. D. Donald, master of the Prince George, is ashore in Vancouver.

THE MAN IN THE MOON
says:

THREE Ontario girls caused the death of a woman and were convicted of manslaughter. That's law.

THEY built themselves a garage
Then bought themselves a car
Some day to that they'll add a home
Which kids perchance may mar.

A MAN has become a real citizen when he can cuss the weather without the other citizens being mad at him.

VERY soon we shall hear people say Prince Rupert has more cars according to population than any other city on the continent. There are only five thousand other cities that make the same claim.

AFTER all, the performance last night would seem to indicate there is not much difference between the Japanese and our own race.

MY political program is "More fun for the man in the moon."

AFTER all, I think a political meeting is about as funny as that Mikado show last night and you get it free.

PROOF readers are those quiet obscure men who are blamed for the mistakes the authors and politicians make.

TRAFALGAR DAY STILL HONORED

One Hundred and Twenty Years Ago Since Britain's Great Admiral Lost His Life in Action

Today is the 120th anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar when Admiral Lord Nelson, Britain's greatest naval commander, breathed his last on the old flagship Victory which still floats at Portsmouth, an honored relic of fighting methods long since become obsolete. Today, as they have done for the past 120 years, every Jack Tar in the British fleet wears a black silk scarf under his broad collar, the bow in the front being the only part showing. The wearing of this scarf was ordered on the day Lord Nelson was buried and the order has never been countermanded.

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If you like to have the best
Phone 75.
Lexington Hudson Super-six and Dodges. First and only 7 passenger Sedan in city. All new closed cars.

RATES
1 or 4 Passengers .. $1.00
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7 or 8 Passengers .. $2.00
5-Passenger Sedan, per hour $4.00
7-Passenger Sedan, per hour $5.00
To Cold Storage and Across Hays Creek Bridge, 1 or 2 passengers $1.00
Each additional passenger 50c each.

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An Exquisite Stock of Fur Trimmings at low prices.

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Next G.W.V.A. Third Ave.

FORD
Improved models will be on view this month. We have two present type Sedans upon which we are offering special inducements.
S. E. Parker Ltd.

EASY DEVIL'S FOOD CAKE

Mrs. M. B. P. has sent a "Devil's Food" recipe that is so simple and so good we will print it here on Thursday.

We would like to mention this good cook's name, but at her request, we can use only her initials. We express our thanks to her.

Pacific Milk Co.
Limited
Head Office, Vancouver
Factories: Ladner and Abbotsford, B.C.

NOTICE.

IN THE MATTER of an application for the issue of Provisional Certificates of Title for Lot 3, Block 2; Lots 9 and 10, Block 8; Lots 7 and 8, Block 11; Lots 5, 6, 7 and 8, Block 12; Lots 1 and 2, Block 15; Lots 3 and 4, Block 16; Lots 3, 4, 7, 8, 11 and 12, Block 17; Lots 11 and 12, Block 20; Lots 9 and 10, Block 21; Lots 10, 11 and 12, Block 22; Lots 1, 3 and 4, Block 24; and Lot 3, Block 8, all in the First Addition, Townsite of Fort Simpson, Map 413; And, the East half of part 12 acres of Lot 9, Range 5, Coast District.

Satisfactory proof of the loss of the Certificates of Title covering the above lands having been produced to me, it is my intention to issue, after the expiration of one month from the first publication hereof, Provisional Certificates of Title to the above lands in the name of CHARLES M. JOHNSON. The original Certificates of Title are dated the 4th August, 1908, the 3rd January, 1914, and the 16th November, 1904, respectively, and are numbered 18355C, 5009I, and 10564C.

Land Registry Office, Prince Rupert, B.C., 25th September, 1925.
H. F. MacLEOD,
Registrar of Titles

LAND ACT.

Notice of Intention to Apply to Lease Lands

In Prince Rupert Land Recording District, and situate at Cove, Spicer Island, about 60.00 chains southeasterly from the extreme northwest end of Spicer Island and about 24.00 chains east from Schooner Pass.

Take notice that Wallace Fisheries Limited, of Vancouver, B.C., occupation cannerymen, intends to apply for a lease of the following prescribed lands:—

Commencing at a post planted about 60.00 chains in a southeasterly direction from the extreme northwest end of Spicer Island, and 24.00 chains east from Schooner Pass; thence south 2.61 chains; thence east 4.84 chains; thence northwesterly meandering along the line of high tide to post of commencement, and containing 1.00 acre, more or less.

WALLACE FISHERIES LIMITED.
Applicant.

Dated September 26th, 1925.

GOVERNMENT LIQUOR ACT

Notice of Application for Beer License.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on the 15th day of October, 1925, the undersigned intends to apply to the Liquor Control Board for a license in respect to premises, being part of the building known as Skidegate Boarding House, situated at Skidegate, upon the lands described as Lot 10, Block 4, according to a registered map or plan deposited in the Land Registry Office at the City of Prince Rupert and numbered 948, for the sale of beer by the glass or by the open bottle for consumption on the premises.

Dated at Skidegate, B.C. this 29th day of September, 1925.

EDMUND C. STEVENS,
Owner, Applicant

CASSIAR LAND DISTRICT.

Recording District of Telegraph Creek.

TAKE NOTICE that John Jacob Fowler, of Great Glacier, Stikine, rancher, intends to apply for permission to purchase the following described lands:

Commencing at a post planted on the west bank of the Stikine River, near the Great Glacier, at southeast corner; thence running north 20 chains; thence in a westerly direction 20 chains; thence in a southerly direction 20 chains; thence in an easterly direction 20 chains, to commencement post.

Dated August 21st, 1925.

JOHN JACOB FOWLER.

LAND ACT

Notice of Intention to Apply to Purchase Land.

In the Land Recording District of Prince Rupert, and situate on Big Falls Creek which flows into the Ecstall River about 18 miles from its mouth.

TAKE NOTICE that Prince Rupert Spruce Mills, Limited, of Prince Rupert, occupation lumber manufacturers, intends to apply for permission to purchase the following described lands:—

Commencing at a post planted about 10 chains northerly from the southeast corner of Lot 635, Range four; thence 40 chains northerly; thence 40 chains easterly; thence 40 chains southerly; thence 40 chains westerly to point of commencement, and containing 160 acres, more or less.

PRINCE RUPERT SPRUCE MILLS, LIMITED.
Applicant
Per C. P. Riel, Agent

Dated August 6th, 1925

LAND ACT.

In the Atlin Land District of Cassiar.

TAKE NOTICE that I, Eliphlet Nott Potter, of New York, N.Y., U.S.A., occupation broker, intends to apply for permission to purchase the following described lands:

Commencing at a post planted about 20 chains south of Racine's Point on the west side of Tagish Lake, about eleven miles south of the Yukon boundary line; thence west 20 chains; thence north 40 chains; thence east 20 chains; thence southerly following along the shore line of Tagish Lake to point of commencement, said parcel containing 80 acres, more or less.

ELIPHLET NOTT POTTER,
Applicant.
Fred Lawson, Agent

Dated August 10th, 1925.