

Busy Season for Breeders Ready Mink for Market

With Christmas just around the corner, most husbands are racking their brains for a gift for their wives. Try a mink coat!

Seldom does a woman wearing a mink coat or jacket stop to consider what the expensive and elegant coat she is wearing consists of, or how it actually materialized.

Just in case one wonders about the story of a mink coat, we took a reporter's look into the basic problems encountered by mink ranches. Mr. and Mrs. Des O'Rourke, R. R. 4, Acton, are two of many in this district who raise mink for the fur trade.

Mink Cycle
In March of every year mink are bred and the young are born around the first two weeks in May. Litters include anywhere from four to five young.

Around the end of July, the young are weaned and separated from each other in private pens in an enclosure to keep their fur from becoming matted in the sun.

The mink are fed a balanced diet of fresh food which arrives daily at the mink ranch and each one receives from six to eight ounces of food which resembles hamburger daily.

A mink is worthless until November 20 when the fur is at its best and ready to be skinned. In the event a mink should die before this time (and it happens often) the dead animal is buried as its fur has no value what soever.

Instant Death
In late November, the O'Rourkes are especially busy, as are other mink breeders. One person

catches the animal and holds it while the other injects a poison into the animal's heart. This kills the mink instantly.

Once dead, the carcass is left to cool for about four hours, then skinned carefully and all fat removed from the pelt. Next process is to place the pelts in a drum with cleaning solvent and crushed corn cob and whirl them around for about 25 minutes to thoroughly clean the skins. After removal from the drum, each is shaken thoroughly and then put on specially shaped boards to stretch and be tailored.

The next process is to place these boards on drying racks in room temperatures not exceeding 60 degrees Fahrenheit and allowed to dry slowly for the natural oil to be retained.

Shipped for Auction
After the pelts are removed from the stretchers, they are packed and shipped to the fur auction houses. Average price for mink breeders for a male pastel brown fur is between \$25 - \$30, females bringing about \$10 less.

If this seems to be a lot, consider the care through the period of raising the mink, not to mention the cost of the feeding bill and the gamble mink breeders take in the event some contract a disease and die.

The O'Rourkes raise around 500 animals per year but also do custom work (skinning etc.) for other mink breeders.

Now, for that husband who is looking for a special Christmas present for his wife and might consider raising his own mink, take a tip from most mink breeders. Visit a reputable furrier and buy the finished product! It's less trouble and worry.

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GORDON

HARDWARE LIMITED

Thursday evening. She displayed and explained "Canadian Gem" rocks which she and her husband collect, polish and mount in jewelry. The program was arranged by Mrs. W. Mitchell. A number of ladies brought articles for sale and Mrs. Giesby, the president, auctioned them.
Little Dwayne Mathey is well again after a few days in Sick Children's Hospital with an intestinal infection.

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For Best
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Y'S MEN'S CHRISTMAS TREES

AT THE
Acton Y.M.C.A. Starting December 12th
BEST TREES BEST PRICES

Yule Child Care Urged by Chief

The holiday season introduces many new fire hazards into the home. Fire Chief Mick Holmes warned today. While Christmas is a time for children, they might face real danger from fire if they are left alone and unattended even for the shortest interval.

The highly inflammable Christmas tree, decorations and gift wrappings make it an imperative duty of all parents to make sure their children are never without responsible supervision.

The fire chief quoted Section 189 of the Criminal Code of Canada: "Every one who unlawfully

abandons or exposes a child who is under the age of ten years, so that its life is or is likely to be endangered or its health is or is likely to be permanently injured, is guilty of an indictable offence and is liable to imprisonment for two years."

During this season of parties and visiting, there is an increased tendency to leave children alone "just for a minute", but it only takes 18 seconds for a Christmas tree to burn furiously to charred wood!

If you must go out, the fire chief advises, get a responsible

BETTER MILEAGE?

The Ontario Safety League quotes a report of a demonstration by a journalist who deliberately ran his car until it ran out of gas, then removed the cap from the gas tank, started up again and covered nearly six miles before the car finally stopped. The report says it's a result of faulty air vents in the tank and won't work for most cars built since 1960, when air vents were improved.

babysitter for the children and you will enjoy your party much more.

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and many, many other brand new toys that Santa has just made

You will be able to find in our basement store a complete assortment of decorations for the home — the Christmas tree and the Christmas table: Glass Ornaments - Tinsel - Roping Electrical Tree Sets - Tree Tops, etc. Garlands - Wreaths - Bells - Corsages Table Favours and Decorations Candles - Tablecloth and Napkins, etc.

The Store that gives you a better choice, a better quality, a lower price

HINTON'S 5c to \$1 STORE



MINK COAT ANYONE? Des O'Rourke, R.R. 4, Acton, shows the skinning process designed by himself for taking the fur off the dead mink as he prepares them for market. Mr. and Mrs. O'Rourke have been in the business for a number of years and at present are in the peak of the season. He is shown holding a dead animal in his left hand while in his right is a partially skinned animal.



SCRAPING PROCESS in the production of mink skins has been made easier for Mrs. Des O'Rourke by a machine made by her husband. An electric motor with a vibrating stainless steel blade does the work which was all done by hand previously.

LIMBHOUSE

Canadian Gems Shown W.I. Mother, Child in Accident

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Sinclair of Hamilton visited the A. C. Pattersons on November 29.

We regret that Mrs. Earl Breeden and little daughter were badly cut in a motor accident on Friday evening and are in hospital in Georgetown. We hope that they may make a good recovery.

We hope that Mr. Jas. Noble soon recovers from last week's heart attack. He, too, is in hospital in Georgetown.

Mr. T. H. Price visited cousins at Simcoe for a few days recently. Mrs. J. J. Farmer was guest speaker at the W.I. meeting at the home of Mrs. A. W. Benton on

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