

Origin of Fur-Farming Industry.—A short account of the origin of the fur-farming industry in Canada was given on p. 249 of the 1929 edition of the Year Book. A fuller description of the rise of the industry in Prince Edward Island, its original home, was given in the Census and Statistics Monthly for May, 1914, at p. 110, while a still more detailed account of the earlier history of the industry was given in a publication of the Commission of Conservation, Ottawa, entitled "Fur Farming in Canada", by J. Walter Jones, B.A., B.S.A., the second edition of which was published in 1914.

Fur Farms of Canada.—The term "fur farm" includes farms devoted entirely to the raising of fur-bearing animals (principally silver foxes), together with parts of farms where the raising of fur-bearing animals is carried on as a distinct branch of the operations. Although the fox has proved the most suited to domestication, other kinds of fur-bearing wild animals are being raised in captivity—mink, raccoon, skunk, marten, fisher and fitch. Mink farms are now the most numerous of the miscellaneous class, raccoon farms coming second. A few of the fox farms also raise miscellaneous fur-bearing animals as well as foxes. In addition to these farms where animals are raised in rather confined captivity, many areas of marsh, stream or lake are being operated as muskrat and beaver farms. In the case of these semi-aquatic animals, however, although the animals are usually kept within a carefully fenced area where they are given supplementary food and are protected from predatory enemies, they nevertheless live and breed under natural conditions.

For many years the fox-farming industry was expanding so rapidly, both in Canada and abroad, that the chief source of income of ranches was the sale of live animals for breeding purposes, while the production of pelts was a minor or incidental feature. Thus, in 1925 the value of live silver foxes sold was \$2,755,000, while that of silver fox pelts was only \$736,000. As the number of foxes on fur farms progressively increased, ranchers had to readjust their economy to declining values for both live animals and pelts. The industry appears to be gradually becoming stabilized on a pelt basis rather than on a live animal basis. In the latest year, 1934, the value of live silver foxes sold was only \$488,847, while that of silver fox pelts sold was \$3,690,431, and for all fur farms sales of pelts represented 87 p.c. of the total revenue.

Statistics of Fur Farms.—The earliest Dominion-wide statistics of fur farms were collected for the year 1919. Since then annual statistics have been obtained covering the numbers of farms and animals, the values of animals, land and buildings, and the number and values of animals and pelts sold. The statistics of 1919 recorded 429 fur farms with 8,326 fur-bearing animals. The wide growth of the industry since then is evident from the statistics of the tables which follow.

Table 1, showing the number of farms and capital investment in the industry by provinces, indicates that Prince Edward Island no longer holds its earlier margin of supremacy in the industry. In recent years the larger and more populous provinces of Quebec and Ontario have exceeded Prince Edward Island in the number of fur farms and in the capital invested in fur-bearing animals, as well as in land and buildings used for fur farming.