

Among the rodents, the beaver has the most valuable fur, but this animal has begun to show signs of decreasing and restrictions on the taking of beaver have been made more rigid in consequence. Muskrat is now quite highly prized and, so far as number of pelts taken is concerned, is far in advance of any other species; under the trade name of "Hudson seal" its pelt has become a favourite moderate-priced fur.

Conservation.—At pp. 288-289 of the 1939 Year Book a short section appears dealing with conservation measures undertaken in regard to fur bearers.

Section 2.—Fur Farming.*

The fur trade is becoming more and more dependent upon the fur farms for its supplies of raw furs. In 1921 the value of pelts of ranch-bred animals accounted for only 3 p.c. of the total value of raw fur production, while in 1937 it had risen to approximately 40 p.c.

Origin of the Fur-Farming Industry.—A short account of the origin of the fur-farming industry in Canada is given at p. 249 of the 1929 edition of the Year Book, while a more detailed account of the earlier history of the industry is 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' applies both to farms devoted entirely to the raising of fur-bearing animals and to parts of farms where the raising of fur-bearing animals is carried on as a branch of the operations. In addition to such farms, where animals are raised in rather confined quarters, 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.

Silver fox was the first important commercial fur bearer successfully raised in captivity, and it remains of greatest importance. The fur-farming industry, however, now includes other kinds of fur bearers—mink, fisher, marten, raccoon, and nutria. Mink farming, in particular, is showing rapid advancement throughout the Dominion, and is now second only to silver-fox farming. Considerable interest has been aroused by the announcement that the valuable chinchilla, a native of the Andes in South America, has been introduced into Canada. The first record is for the year 1937, when a farm in Saskatchewan reported the purchase of a pair. In 1938 a farm in Alberta also reported chinchillas. In California success has attended experiments in raising this fur bearer, and it is from that State the Canadian purchases were made. It is hoped that the Canadian climate will prove equally suitable for the raising of the chinchilla.

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

* Revised by Miss F. A. Brown, Chief of the Fisheries and Animal Products Branch, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This Branch publishes detailed annual reports on fur farms and on the production of raw furs.