

# CHAPTER XIV.—FUR RESOURCES AND FUR PRODUCTION

## CONSPECTUS

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### Section 1.—The Fur Trade

**Historical Sketch.**—A historical outline tracing the development of the fur industry is published at pp. 281–282 of the 1946 Year Book. See also list of Special Articles under Fur Trade at the front of this volume.

**The Modern Industry.**—During the present century the fur trade has changed greatly. With the advance of settlement, trapping has moved northward in all provinces but by far the most important development has been the establishment of fur farming independently or as an ancillary branch of specialized agriculture. This is dealt with in Section 2, pp. 420–422 however, and the purpose here is to trace the recent changes that have marked the trapping of fur-bearing animals in the wild state.

The conservation of fur-bearers, which has marked the policy of federal and provincial authorities to an increasing extent, has been made necessary by an increasing demand for furs coupled with decreasing supplies. The resulting substantial rise in prices also brought about a tendency to ‘over-trapping’, and it has been found necessary to control the ‘take’ by prohibition, close seasons and the enforcement of trapping regulations. However, in a country of such extent, where trappers, both White and Indian, are scattered over a vast wilderness, prohibition of capture of certain animals with the aim of conserving future catches is not always effective. Such furs become higher priced because of this scarcity and the temptation to violate protective measures is great.

One noteworthy reconstructive measure that appears to have had a very beneficial influence on the rehabilitation of certain fur-bearers, especially beaver and muskrat, is the organized development of marshlands where these animals are actively assisted to increase their numbers in their natural habitat.

All provinces to-day have their trapping regulations and licence individual trappers. Some provinces register trap lines. The Saskatchewan Government has recently inaugurated a system whereby districts are assigned to individual licensed trappers. The licensee in his own interests will see to it that poaching on his preserve is stopped.

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics began the annual collection of returns from dealers in raw furs in 1919 with the co-operation of the Provincial Governments which supply lists of licensed dealers.

The first year of the record showed that raw furs taken in the 1919–20 season had a value of \$21,048,670; this figure, however, was abnormally high as compared with the average season. For instance, during the 1929–30 season the value was