

Other fur animals of economic importance are fisher, fox, lynx, marten, mink, otter, squirrel and rabbit. These animals have fluctuated in population as well as in pelt value in past years but the increased production of beaver and muskrats has helped stabilize the income of the trapper. Even though most fur prices have declined in recent years, the income received from Saskatchewan wild fur pelts has been maintained.

Badger, raccoon and wolverine are at present of little economic importance. Wolves and coyotes are on the predator list as well as foxes in settled areas and very comprehensive programs of control have been carried on to reduce the population of these animals.

By 1948, it was quite apparent that bounties did not have the desired effect of reducing the coyote population. A paid-hunter program was, therefore, introduced, in co-operation with the rural municipalities, in which all field personnel were directly responsible to the Department of Natural Resources. Under strict supervision these men used guns, traps, cyanide guns or coyote-getters and poison. The program has been extremely successful and coyotes are no longer a problem in settled areas. A \$10 bounty has been continued on wolves, but bait treated with poison placed out on large lakes in isolated areas has been the most direct line of control. Here again, only employees of the Department are allowed to handle the poison. This work is becoming increasingly important not only to protect game that is necessary to the welfare of people living in the north country but also to reduce the chances of spreading the rabies epidemic which has been apparent in the West during the past two years as well as hydatid disease which has been found in some species of big game.

The weasel is a valuable fur bearer as well as a controller of rodents and, to increase its population, there has been a demand to have the close season extended throughout the greater part of the settled areas. However, closure in large areas does not seem to increase the weasel population, and the Department is carrying on biological studies to ascertain the effect of trapping on these valuable fur bearers at various degrees of intensity over a period of years.

Alberta.—The current wild fur trade of Alberta depends mainly on the fine fur group consisting of muskrat, ermine, beaver, mink and squirrel. This group accounted for 97 p.c. of the total value of the 1952-53 catch. The depressed condition of the market for long-haired coarse-furred pelts, including fox, skunk, lynx and rabbit, has kept the trapping of these animals at a low level for some years. During the 1952-53 season, the prices of furs generally remained low, except for a few species. Statistics show that more pelts were taken but the financial return to the trappers decreased.

Wild fur production in Alberta is controlled through the registered trapline system. During the past few years, except for very slight fluctuations, the number of registered traplines has remained fairly constant in the neighbourhood of 3,000, of which approximately 800 have been registered by Treaty Indians. The registration fee of \$10 per line is paid by the Federal Government on behalf of the Indians. The stabilized trapline situation is accounted for by the prevalence of both muskrat and beaver. Before the institution of the system, the beaver was almost extinct in the Province, but in the ten years of beaver management the population has increased until it is now necessary to trap and remove beaver from areas where they are not wanted and where they cause considerable damage. Muskrat presents the same