

Northwest Territories.—Utilization of fur and game resources in the Northwest Territories is governed by the Northwest Territories Game Ordinance. Trapping privileges are available only to resident Indians and Eskimos and those white persons who were licensed to hunt and trap in the Territories prior to 1938 and who have continued to reside therein. Provision is also made for the issue of General Hunting Licences to the descendants of these white persons.

Because of the nomadic nature of the Eskimo and the large areas over which he must hunt and trap, there is no provision for trapline registration in the Franklin and Keewatin Districts, though a number of game preserves have been established in the Territories to preserve the fur and game therein for the natives. Largest of these is the Arctic Islands Game Preserve comprising all the Arctic Islands north of the mainland plus a large area on the mainland.

Provision under the Game Ordinance for the establishment of registered traplines became effective in the Mackenzie District on July 1, 1949. Under this legislation exclusive trapping rights in limited areas are granted to the trappers to encourage them to manage carefully the fur-bearers found there and to effect improvements leading to increased fur production. The Mackenzie District is divided into 12 Warden Districts (including Wood Buffalo Park) covering 386,615 sq. miles—over half under registration. There are 319 individual registered areas and 118 group registered areas.

The downward trend of the fur market during the past few years has caused trappers to lose interest in trapline activities: many have obtained employment elsewhere and others have refused to trap very far away from the settlements. The fur take reflects this lack of interest: though lynx, marten, otter and weasel have remained steady and slight increases are noted for fisher, wolf and wolverine, the take of beaver, fox, mink, muskrat and squirrel has shown a decided decrease. Pelts taken in the 1952-53 season were: muskrat, 250,367; squirrel, 68,611; white fox, 36,474; weasel, 12,418; beaver, 6,339; mink, 5,395; marten, 5,002; lynx, 1,575; black, blue, cross, red and silver fox, 1,227; wolf, 531; otter, 143; wolverine, 102; and fisher, 30.

Beaver and marten are taken on a quota basis: trappers are permitted to shoot or trap one beaver for each occupied beaver lodge. In areas where beaver are scarce and where conditions are suitable, transplant operations are carried out. Close seasons are established when it becomes apparent that a particular species of fur-bearing animal is being over-trapped. A wolf-poisoning program is carried out in areas where these animals have become detrimental to desirable wildlife.

Game-law enforcement is in the hands of wardens stationed at the principal settlements in the Mackenzie District; elsewhere in the Territories it is handled by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

Section 3.—Fur Farming

Fur-bearing animals were first raised on farms in Prince Edward Island around 1887 and in Quebec in 1898; to-day fur farming is carried on in all provinces of Canada. Foxes were the first fur-bearers to be raised in captivity on a commercial scale but mink, chinchilla, raccoon, marten, fisher, fitch, nutria and others are now being reared. Mink are the most numerous, followed by the various types of foxes and these two far outnumber all other kinds of fur-bearing animals.