

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 which comprises 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 11 Warden Districts (including Wood Buffalo Park) covering 386,615 sq. miles—over 50 p.c. under registration. There are 317 individual registered areas and 118 group registered areas.

The downward trend of the fur market during recent 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 and otter have remained steady and sharp increases have been noted for muskrat and beaver. The take of fox, weasel, mink and squirrel has shown a decided decrease. Pelts taken in the 1953-54 season were: muskrat 321,760, squirrel 38,116, white fox 27,178, weasel 9,218, beaver 9,760, mink 4,477, marten 4,863, lynx 1,244, black, blue, cross, red and silver fox 1,090, wolf 475, otter 133, wolverine 100 and fisher 18.

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 overtrapped and 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 in Canada on farms in Prince Edward Island about 1887 and in Quebec in 1898; today fur farming is carried on in all the provinces. 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 species far outnumber all other kinds of fur bearing animals.

There was a slow and steady increase in the number of fur farms until 1920 when 587 were reported, followed by a period of more rapid growth from 1920 to 1938 when the number reached 10,454. In 1939, with the loss of the London and other European markets, prices declined and many fur farms went out of production. Though prices rose considerably after World War II, operating costs increased and the number of fur farms, particularly those conducted in conjunction with other farming operations, continued to decrease. By 1953 only 2,513 reported but volume of production has been maintained.

Though the earliest and most intensive fur farming operations were concerned with fox raising in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec the sharp decline in the popularity of fox furs and the steady rise in mink resulted in Ontario and western Canada taking predominant positions in the raising of fur animals. A distribution of the 321,057 animals on fur farms at Dec. 31, 1953 showed 15 p.c. in British Columbia, 47 p.c. in the Prairie Provinces, 26 p.c. in Ontario, 8 p.c. in Quebec and 5 p.c. in the Maritime Provinces.