

During the 1930's, Norwegian agents came to Eastern Canada to purchase large numbers of live foxes and by 1939 Norway was marketing about twice Canada's production of fox pelts yearly. It was from one of the live animals purchased in Quebec that the platinum fox originated. Canada's registration system for pedigreed stock required the destruction of any fox showing white above the hocks—otherwise, Canadian breeders could have had the platinum fox years before. Norwegian breeders, not having a registration system, could retain any type of fox regardless of marking. It was in 1933 that the first platinum fox was born and from that animal the first litter was born in 1934. In January 1940, 400 Norwegian platinum fox pelts were offered for sale by auction in New York. The entire collection was sold for an average price of \$548; the top price for one pelt was \$11,000. The same pelt today would realize about \$12.

By the end of the War the Scandinavian countries had accumulated over a million fox pelts and to market them they entered into compensation or barter deals with countries that before the War had purchased large quantities of Canadian fox pelts—France, Italy, Belgium and Holland. These compensation deals averaged about \$7 a pelt; in Canada it cost approximately \$30 to produce a fox. Currency restrictions, the lack of dollars and these barter deals were the main factors that brought about the downfall of the silver fox industry. Today Canada's annual production is about 2,000 pelts.

Because fur is a luxury item, highly international in character, the fur trade is particularly susceptible to world economic and political conditions. It was inevitable, then, that World War II and its aftermath would greatly disarrange the fur market and that the market would improve with the later upswing in world economic conditions. When the War began it was feared that the fur market would collapse as it had in 1914 when blanket beaver dropped to 75 cents a pelt and muskrat to five cents a pelt. But this did not happen—in fact the best market enjoyed during the war years was in the 1943-44 season when all furs, long-haired and short-haired alike, were in demand and the price received for red fox averaged \$16, for fisher \$70, lynx \$50, marten \$44, standard silver fox \$33, platinum fox \$70, blue fox \$37, cross fox \$21 and white fox \$34, while the top price for beaver was \$77.50. Although the countries that traditionally produced the most fur—the Soviet Union, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, China and Japan—retained their position in that respect, a new trend for the industry developed as a result of wartime economic complexities. The famous fur auction of Leipzig no longer played its important role of prewar days. Because the fur dealers of the world desired most of all to sell their pelts for dollars, New York City took on such importance as a market that it became in many respects the fur capital of the world.

In 1947 and 1948 the important prewar fur outlets in Europe were closed; those countries were spending their money rebuilding homes and factories. The other important outlet, the United States, provided a limited market since only the kinds of fur not domestically produced were imported. Nevertheless, producing countries abroad, needing dollars for reconstruction and for replacing worn-out equipment, flooded the New York market with furs. With this large accumulation of pelts being offered for sale and the unstable market throughout Europe, prices started to decline, reaching a low in the 1953-54 season when beaver averaged \$10.57, fisher \$17.50, lynx \$3.62, marten \$7.00, silver fox \$8.00, platinum fox \$9.75, blue fox \$9.70, cross fox \$1.87, red fox 78 cents and white fox \$11.00. During this period, a number of countries with which Canada had been dealing during the war years imposed restrictions on imports of luxury commodities. Such luxury commodities included furs and, with currency restrictions, the marketing of pelts became quite a problem for the Canadian fur industry.

In comparatively recent years there has been a notable development in the fur ranching industry pioneered by Canada. The successful domestication of the silver fox, mink and other fur bearing animals of high pelt value has introduced a new and profitable branch of animal husbandry, which now accounts for about 62 p.c. of the value of Canada's animal fur pelt production. Capital investment in the 2,200 fur farms, including the fur bearing