

animals, land and buildings, amounts to approximately \$40,000,000. The value of the 5,370,580 pelts marketed in the 1958-59 season, the latest for which complete figures are available, was \$25,801,395, of which wildlife pelts caught in their native habitat accounted for \$9,707,035 and pelts raised on fur farms for \$16,094,360.

Fur farming is carried on in all provinces. An experimental fox ranch operated by the federal Department of Agriculture at Summerside in Prince Edward Island specializes in the breeding, feeding, housing and general care of fox and mink. Although the fox was the first type to be raised in captivity, many other kinds of fur bearing animals are now being raised—mink, marten, fisher, rabbit and chinchilla.

Mink farms are by far the most numerous. Not only are the fur farms producing the original dark brown mink but, through a number of mutations that have occurred genetically, mink is being offered in many colours that are readily accepted on the markets of the world. These mutations, which have occurred over the past twenty years in great variety, and especially during the past five years, run the gamut from dark to light shades in Silverblu, Pastel (honey-brown), Aleutian (gunmetal with bluish aspects), Sapphire (metallic blue) and pure White or almost pure White. Of course, there is a whole variety of dilutions or concentrations of these various colours which puzzle even the expert breeder, and not all colours are desirable or marketable. There have been several mutations which were quite strong-furred but which produced awkward colour patterns, such as the Koh-i-nur (essentially a black-and-white animal with the black, in the best instances, in the form of a cross) and the so-called Blue-Frost type (a dark mink with some silver hairs and with a lighter under-fur). These types were difficult to match in coat-making and lack of enthusiasm among buyers brought prices down and soon made their production unprofitable. However, some of the factors in different settings proved valuable. The Blue-Frost inheritance, when transferred to the Silverblu and to the Sapphire, became known as Breath-of-Spring. It was a silvering and paling of an already silver-bluish fur which became quite desirable to the trade and therefore higher priced than the plain Silverblu and plain Sapphire. The Koh-i-nur mink, by continual selection, eliminated most of the black and became the White mink. It might have a black tail or a few very small black spots on its head but, because both of these appendages are dispensed with in making a coat, it is treated as a pure White mink and the prices have been exceptionally high.

During the ten years 1951-60, the fur market was dominated by ranch-raised mink and long-haired furs were very much neglected. In 1951, the world mink crop was estimated at 3,500,000 pelts and the market opened with prices on all types 20 to 40 p.c. higher than the opening prices of the previous year. Some of the highs obtained in New York were \$128 for Aleutian, \$105 for White, \$98 for Breath-of-Spring, \$86 for Royal Pastel and \$64 for Standard. The first sale of Sapphire mink was made in 1957, the top bundle selling for \$350 a skin. This was the highest amount ever paid for ranch mink. In 1952-54, prices were much easier than in 1951 and then in 1955, partly because there was no carryover from the previous season, the average price of all mink sold went up to \$26.28. The first sale of Winterblu was made that year, the top lot bringing \$340 per pelt. In 1956, there was an active demand for all types and opening prices were 5 to 10 p.c. higher than early sales the previous year. In 1957-59, prices of dark mink advanced from 33 to 45 p.c. over 1956 prices as a result of increased demand for that type and lower production. In 1960, production of ranch mink throughout the world continued to increase. Contrary to predictions, the estimated world crop of 12,500,000 pelts, through the combination of higher production and foreign imports, did not bring about a drop in prices. An upsurge in the popularity of fur-trimmed garments and millinery created an expanded market for mink which absorbed most of the increase and left few pelts on the market at the end of the season.

It may be interesting to dispel the popular misconception that the cost of producing a mink is but little and the realization from these pelts is high by mentioning some of the numerous problems confronting the Canadian rancher. During the past fifteen years the cost of feed has risen rapidly and is continuing to do so. For example, horsemeat is a