

These groups can also assist in ensuring proper handling and marketing of the raw furs and in up-grading quality, thus commanding good market prices.

New Brunswick.—A fur management program is just being started in New Brunswick. The first fur bearer to be investigated is the muskrat and the study area is on the St. John River in the Fredericton—Gagetown area, one of the best muskrat areas in the province. For many years the open season on muskrat has been held in the spring. Also, the beaver will soon be receiving more attention. For about 20 years, trapping of this animal was not permitted and the first open season was declared in 1946. As a result, the beaver has made a remarkable recovery and there has been an open season each year since 1951, the annual take averaging about 7,500 pelts. It is now thought that, if heavier trapping is not done, there will soon be cause for concern over beaver damage to farms and woodlots, highways and railways.

There are closed seasons on fisher and marten. These animals are found mainly in the northern part of the province but as their numbers appear to be increasing they are gradually working their way farther south. A zoned trapping season is being considered on these two animals in 1965. Mink and otter are not prevalent in the province but in the two-month fall trapping season the catches average about 1,700 and 240, respectively. In 1962-63 about 2,500 trapping licences were issued.

Recent provincial legislation will enable quick changes to be made in trapping seasons; thus, the autumn benefit of available fur may be utilized by the trapper or a closed season established on any fur bearer showing signs of serious depletion in numbers. A summary of trapping laws, which includes information as to how the different pelts should be handled to receive the best price, is available from the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Department of Lands and Mines.

Quebec.—The fur trade has been of considerable importance in Quebec since the beginning of New France and the province has remained in the forefront of fur producers. The principal native species, in order of importance, are beaver, mink, muskrat, hair-seal, otter, lynx and marten.

Management of wild fur bearers began in 1932 with the establishment by an official of the Hudson's Bay Company of a privately leased reserve at Rupert House. The administration of this reserve passed to the Hudson's Bay Company and a second concession, at Nottoway, was granted to the Company in 1938. Strict conservation practices were enforced in these two reserves with such success that the provincial government took over their management and have since added steadily to the area of Crown lands set aside for Indian trappers. At present, 12 reserves are under conservation: Rupert House, 7,500 sq. miles (1932); Nottoway, 11,300 sq. miles (1938); Vieux Comptoir, 30,000 sq. miles (1941); Peribonca, 12,600 sq. miles (1941); Fort George, 17,700 sq. miles (1942); Abitibi, 6,000 sq. miles (1943); Great Victoria Lake, 6,300 sq. miles (1948); Mistassini, 50,000 sq. miles (1948); Manouane, 5,000 sq. miles (1951); Roberval, 20,000 sq. miles (1951); Bersimis, 21,000 sq. miles (1951); and Saguenay, 140,000 sq. miles (1955). The value of beaver pelts alone taken from these reserves in 1963 was \$367,000.

In 1945, a separate system of registered lands for white trappers was set up in the areas of Abitibi-Est, Abitibi-Ouest, Rouyn-Noranda, Témiscamingue, Pontiac and part of Saguenay County. Each leaseholder is granted exclusive trapping rights on his assigned land and each is subject to strict regulation. The trapping of fur bearers, other than beaver, is not restricted on either the reserves or the registered lands except for a general regulation concerning the protection of animals and the fixing of catch limits. Recently, biological research has been undertaken to assess the results of this system.

In 1963, the value of the catch of wild furs in Quebec amounted to approximately \$2,500,000—a fraction of the value of the finished product.

Ontario.—Legislation for the management of wild fur bearers had its beginning in Ontario with the setting of seasons in 1860 by an Act of Upper Canada. However, 32