A large proportion of the Canadian raw fur output is exported, the principal varieties being mink, beaver, seal and muskrat; the value of raw furs exported in the 1963-64 season was $30,159,312. During the same period, raw furs worth $21,509,586 were imported, such imports consisting mainly of mink, Persian lamb, fox and muskrat.

Fur Trapping.—Despite a long period of intensive trapping, the numbers of wild fur bearers in Canada have been well maintained and production of many varieties is greater now than in 1919 when fur statistics were commenced. Some species have adjusted to life in partly settled areas and each year substantial catches of beaver, muskrat, mink, raccoon, squirrel and wolf are made in areas of mixed farm and bush land. However, for lynx, marten, fisher, otter and other wilderness varieties, the northward advance of settlement has moved back the frontier so that the principal trapping grounds now lie in the northern portions of the provinces and in the Northwest Territories. Of prime importance in maintaining the numbers of fur bearers have been the conservation and management policies instituted by the federal and provincial governments which include the establishment of wildlife preserves, parks and sanctuaries. The length of the trapping period is controlled and, where necessary, closed seasons are imposed for the protection of scarce species.

An estimated 50,000 Canadians participate annually in fur trapping activities which in recent seasons have yielded an average revenue of approximately $12,000,000. With the exception, mainly, of native Indians and Eskimos in the more remote northern areas, few trappers now depend solely on trapline earnings for their livelihood. The modern trapper usually is a full-time or part-time wage-earner who carries on his trapping activities during weekends or off seasons. The reason for the decline in the popularity of fur trapping as a full-time occupation lies in the economics of the industry wherein returns from the trapping operation have not kept pace with rising commodity prices. The average prices realized for most of the principal varieties of wild furs were higher during the period 1920-30 than in the late 1950's and early 1960's; this, without taking into account the decreased purchasing power of the dollar since that time. Reasons for the failure of the fur industry to grow with the economy are deep-seated and mainly beyond the power of the trapper to correct. During the 1950's a fashion swing toward short-haired furs, principally mink, resulted in a sharp decrease in the demand and consequently the prices realized for many of the previously important varieties such as lynx, fox and wolf. Returns for marten and for muskrat—the latter one of the bread-and-butter furs of trappers in all areas—also declined sharply during this period. However, the long-haired furs now appear to be staging a comeback; in the 1964-65 season there was a revival of demand for many of the neglected varieties and a corresponding improvement in returns accruing to the trapper.

Fur Farming.—Up to the end of the nineteenth century almost all Canadian furs were taken from the wilds. However, around 1890 the raising of fur bearing animals under domestic conditions was started and has since grown until, in the 1963-64 season, fur farm production accounted for 62.9 p.c. of the total value of Canadian fur production. The advantages of farm production include the ability to practise quality control and selective breeding. Also, the pelts of ranch-raised fur bearers may be harvested when both quality and colour are at their peak. Through trial and error it was found that some animals, notably fox, mink and chinchilla, adapted well to production in captivity.

Fox.—During the period from around 1890 until 1945, the raising of silver foxes on Canadian farms was a thriving industry, with production in the peak year of 1939 amounting to 240,827 pelts. After 1945, increasing world production coupled with the fashion swing away from long-haired furs weakened the market so that returns to producers were often lower than production costs and production fell off rapidly. In the 1963-64 season, 837 pelts were marketed by Canadian producers at the estimated average value per pelt of $12.50. Ironically enough, in view of the comparatively small number of pelts available,