

Under the present fur program, security of trappers has been strengthened; fur bearer population, although still fluctuating to some extent, has through management reached a higher general level, particularly of beaver which is the most important fur animal, rivalled only by wild mink; quotas have put trapping on a sustained-yield basis; poaching has been almost eliminated; higher water levels resulting from the comeback of beaver have improved the habitat for other wildlife; and Indian and non-Indian trappers are sharing alike in the self-government of trapping areas and in fur management policies and programs.

Alberta.—Meetings under the auspices of the Fish and Wildlife Division of the provincial Department of Lands and Forests are held with trappers to advise them of improved methods of trapping and to help alleviate problems in trapping that arise from time to time. Studies are made by the biological staff of the Division regarding fur bearing animals, their habits and their habitat, and knowledge gained from these studies is passed on to the trapper. Pamphlets are distributed to trappers showing how and where to set traps, how to pelt the different fur bearing animals, and regulations in force. The Alberta Government submits pelts to the main fur exhibits in Canada and Europe, a policy that has increased the interest of foreign buyers in Alberta furs.

Several legislative measures have been taken in the past few years. The spring beaver season has been shortened, as a result of which Alberta has been marketing a higher grade pelt. Investigations have shown that beaver pelts coming on prime bring a higher price than pelts going off prime and the main reason for this legislation was to persuade trappers to trap beaver in winter when pelts are at their best. After protection for several years, a season on otter was established in 1964-65 on certain registered trapping areas. It is interesting to note that the number of otter pelts marketed with the open season was no larger than the number accidentally trapped previously. From this limited information it can be assumed that the otter population has not increased to any great extent. The prohibiting of mismanagement of registered trapping areas by holders, although only recently introduced, has had the effect of greatly increasing activity in trapping—areas have been taken away from persons holding them for investment and given to persons willing and able to trap, and borderline trappers have been forced to put more effort into trapping. It should be stated that the present high price of pelts has helped to make this legislation effective.

British Columbia.—The British Columbia wild fur resource is administered by the Fish and Game Branch of the Department of Recreation and Conservation. Regulations are derived under authority of the Game Act and resource use is controlled under the registered trapline system, in effect since 1926. Registered traplines are areas of Crown land allotted, for the purpose of trapping wild fur, to trappers who are resident in the province. Registration of a specific trapline is renewable on an annual basis by the trapper, subject to certain requirements of tenure aimed at conservation and sustained yield of fur species. Approximately 3,000 trappers are involved in provincial wild fur production, of whom one half are Indians.

The market value of wild fur produced during the fur harvest of 1963-64 was \$763,562, beaver comprising 47 p.c., lynx 13 p.c. and wild mink 15 p.c. Pelts of muskrat, otter, marten, fisher, squirrel and weasel made up the remainder. The 1963-64 beaver harvest was the highest since 1923, numbering 26,638 pelts.

Legislative measures entail a general shortening of the annual trapping season to restrict the harvesting of unseasonable pelts. Administrative emphasis is placed on the desirability of increasing the market value of the resource through improved pelt quality. The Branch is a member of the Canadian Fur Council.