

In 1946, under federal-provincial agreement, all Crown lands north of the 53rd parallel were set up as the Northern Fur Conservation Block. Up to \$50,000 a year was to be expended over the following ten years to establish and administer conservation areas, purchase equipment, pay salaries of personnel, transplant live beaver and build dams; the Federal Government agreed to assume 60 p.c. of the cost and the province the remainder. A Fur Advisory Committee, with representation from the provincial Department of Natural Resources and the federal Indian Affairs Branch was set up to supervise the program. Organization of conservation areas was left to the trappers. Five-man councils were elected in all districts, with Indian, metis and white trappers sharing privileges, obligations and responsibilities on an equal basis. Conservation measures and licensing regulations were initiated. In 1956 the agreement was extended for another ten years with minor changes and in 1962 a co-ordinating body was set up by the Fur Advisory Committee to promote better communications and understanding of the fur program. The second federal-provincial agreement terminates in 1966 and negotiations are under way for the drafting of a new agreement which will provide, in addition to an extended fur program, a greatly enlarged plan covering the development of other natural resources, such as fish, forest development on Indian reservations, harvesting of wild rice and other natural crops, etc.

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 programs.

Alberta.—During 1965-66, plans have been formulated for the reorganization of the Fish and Wildlife Division of the provincial Department of Lands and Forests. Under the new set-up, a fur management section will be established to work strictly on the fur resources of the province. More meetings will be held with registered trappers to increase the exchange of information between them and the Division's officers and a more intensive program is being initiated to eliminate as far as possible the misuse of trapping areas by certain trappers and, by amalgamation, to form trapping areas into better economic units. The Alberta Government submits pelts to the main fur exhibits in Canada and Europe, a policy that has increased the interest of foreign and Canadian buyers in Alberta furs.

British Columbia.—The British Columbia wild fur resource is administered by the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the Department of Recreation and Conservation. Regulations are derived under authority of the Wildlife 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 1964-65 was \$600,316, with beaver, squirrel, wild mink and lynx together comprising 78 p.c. of this total value. The 1964-65 beaver harvest numbered 21,769 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.