

established on any fur bearer showing signs of serious depletion in numbers. A summary of trapping laws, which includes information on how the different pelts should be handled to receive the best price, is available from the Fish and Wildlife Branch of the provincial Department of Natural Resources.

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 has 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).

In 1945, a separate system of registered lands for white trappers was set up in the areas of Abitibi East, Abitibi West, 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 1965-66, the value of the catch of wild furs in Quebec amounted to \$2,258,165—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 years passed before there was any field staff to enforce the regulations and then began an era of restrictive legislation to protect species threatened by the earlier exploitation. Progress beyond the restrictive enforcement of open and closed seasons has come about only in the past 20 or 30 years. The first steps in this direction involved the setting aside of special Indian hunting areas in which non-Indians were not allowed to trap.

The registered trapline system was introduced in 1935 on a very small scale. This system is based on government recognition of the desirability of full utilization of the resource and the more efficient management that results when one individual enjoys the exclusive right to trap on such an area. In its early stages, surveyed townships were assigned as trapline areas but more explicit trapline boundaries, established in 1947-48, now cover the province and mostly follow natural physiographical features. At the same time, resident traplines were established in areas of patented land, which means most of southern Ontario; these are blocks of land on which trappers are licensed to trap, providing they make their own written agreements with the landowners. Trapline licences are renewable annually as long as the trapper meets the conditions of the regulations and continues to trap. Trappers may sell the equipment and improvements they have made on their lines and thus have a vested interest in their traplines.

In full realization that fur is a natural resource that cannot in nature be stockpiled, and is harvested on a commercial basis only, the Ontario Department of Lands and Forests has assisted the Ontario Trappers' Association to establish their fur auction at North Bay. This allows the trappers to sell furs on a competitive market and realize their full value.