

Much valuable research has been carried out on fur bearers, with present emphasis on beaver and otter. Transplantings have been successfully carried out to speed the recovery of reduced populations, particularly with beaver. A new aging technique was perfected for beaver a few years ago and recently an aerial beaver survey technique has been developed.

Manitoba.—Trapping and trading in furs is Manitoba's oldest industry and the province produces some of the finest pelts on the world markets. The annual value of the wild furs averages around \$1,630,000.

As the northern areas of Manitoba became more accessible following the construction of the Hudson Bay Railway to Churchill, competition for fur and for trapping grounds became very keen and the fur resources were badly depleted. However, since 1940 a program of trapline registration has been in operation which has eliminated indiscriminate trapping and has offered protection to both the fur bearer and the trapline operator. The once-scarce beaver has been rehabilitated through years of controlled and managed harvests, production reaching 34,216 pelts during the 1965-66 season. A live transplant project has also been implemented to re-stock areas where beaver and marten have become depleted. During the past decade new records in the production of muskrat, mink, lynx, fisher and otter have been established.

The wild fur industry is still of economic importance in Manitoba, particularly so for northern residents, both white and native. A trapper education program was inaugurated in 1957, designed to improve the general handling of furs by trappers and at the same time achieve a certain measure of standardization in pelt care. This program has shown gratifying results and has been expanded to include improved trapping methods and the use of humane trap sets. A booklet, *The Trapper's Guide*, is available from the Wildlife Branch of the provincial Department of Mines and Natural Resources.

Manitoba has been working in close co-operation with federal and other provincial agencies in the promotion of quality furs by exhibiting collections of representative wild furs at the more important European fairs.

Saskatchewan.—Before 1945, little was done to control the trapping of beaver and muskrat in Saskatchewan, other than to establish closed seasons when the fur bearers became depleted from over-trapping, and the lack of a conservation and management policy had a disastrous effect on both the fur resources and the livelihood of trappers. In 1944, the provincial government set up a committee to study trapping problems and the following year the South Saskatchewan Muskrat Trapping Program was instituted. Under this plan, individuals received exclusive rights to trap on definite land locations. Owners and occupants received first consideration, with special priority given to Indians and metis on Crown lands. Muskrat quotas were established to assure continuing populations, and marketing of pelts under government supervision was instituted.

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 terminated in 1966 and negotiations were begun on a new agreement that will carry on the same program and extend the resource manage-