

There was a slow and steady increase in the number of fur farms until 1920 when 587 were reported, with a period of more rapid growth from 1920 to 1938 when the number reached 10,454. After the outbreak of hostilities in 1939 and the loss of the London and European markets, prices declined and many fur farms went out of production. Though prices rose considerably after the War, operating costs also increased and the number of fur farms, particularly those conducted in conjunction with other farming operations, continued to decrease. By 1951, only 3,072 reported but, despite this decrease in number, volume of production gradually increased over the period.

While the earliest and most intensive fur-farming operations were concerned with fox-raising in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec, the sharp decline in the popularity of fox furs and the steady rise in mink resulted in Ontario and Western Canada taking predominant positions in the raising of fur animals. A distribution of the 315,485 animals on fur farms at Dec. 31, 1951, showed 12 p.c. in British Columbia, 47 p.c. in the Prairie Provinces, 25 p.c. in Ontario, 10 p.c. in Quebec and 6 p.c. in the Maritime Provinces.

Furs have for centuries been used for clothing and adornment and, with the demands of fashion, the development of new colour phases in fox and mink has been an important incentive to the fur-farming industry. There have always been mink mutations in the wild state but these unusual animals stood little chance of survival and such pelts were exceedingly rare. Starting with wild-caught mink, breeders have, by cross-breeding, produced mink furs in a variety of colours. Among the earliest mutations to appear was an attractive bluish-gray mink which became known as "Platinum" mink. Then mutations were cross-bred and a still greater profusion of colour combinations appeared, an excellent example of which is the "Sapphire" mink, a cross of the steel-blue "Aleutian" with the blue-gray "Platinum". Other unusual colour patterns are the "Royal Pastel", a beautiful brown mink with a bluish cast, and an exquisite snow-white mink.

In 1937, some chinchillas were imported into Saskatchewan. These valuable little animals have a rich, soft fur. The outlay for raising them is small and, although the original cost of chinchillas was high, there has been a steady increase in the number on farms first by import and then by breeding. In 1951, 8,530 were reported, valued at \$1,800,000.

## Section 2.—Statistics of Fur Production\*

**Total Fur Production Statistics.**—Early records of raw-fur production are confined to the decennial censuses, when account was taken of the numbers and values of pelts obtained by trappers. In 1920, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics commenced an annual survey of raw-fur production, basing the statistics on information supplied by the licensed fur traders. This survey was continued for some years. More recently, annual statements based on royalties, export tax, etc., have been made available by the provincial game departments (except Prince Edward Island), and these statements are now used in the preparation of the statistics issued annually by the Bureau. Figures for Prince Edward Island are based on returns supplied to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics by fur traders in that Province.

\* Revised in the Agriculture Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics.