

in 1951-52 with an estimated value of \$359,560. Registration of traplines and areas is being steadily continued and this work is now reaching into the southern areas of the Province.

Total wild fur production decreased slightly in the 1952-53 season, reflecting lowering prices and a slackening of market demand. Manitoba, however, produced 24,197 beaver, 27,611 mink and 578,885 muskrats during the year, and other pelts taken included: squirrel, 241,067; weasel, 105,831; jack rabbit, 5,318; silver, blue, cross, white and red fox, 3,282; otter, 1,571, and lesser numbers of coyote, timber wolves, skunk, badger, fisher, marten, bear and lynx.

Fur ranching is also a major industry in the Province, with a harvest of \$2,099,470 for the year ending Dec. 31, 1952. A total of 496 fur farms are licensed at present.

Saskatchewan.—The wild fur industry in Saskatchewan has undergone a period of rapid reorganization in the past ten years. A policy of one trapper for any one area has been inaugurated throughout the Province, a system providing security for trappers on their trap lines.

As a result of unethical practices and lack of management, beaver were almost extinct in Saskatchewan in 1944, and the trapping industry, in general, was at a very low ebb. A committee was appointed by the Government in 1945 to consider this unfortunate condition and to recommend steps necessary to encourage and assist trappers dependent on fish and game for their livelihood, particularly in isolated northern areas.

A Fur Marketing Service was established in Regina to give fur producers a local auction where their fur could be graded, displayed and sold to the highest bidder. In 1946, a Fur Conservation Agreement was concluded with the Federal Government by the Province in which the two Administrations agreed to spend certain moneys annually for the purpose of managing fur and game and improving wildlife habitat in the northern isolated areas for the benefit of the residents of those areas. The particular interest of the Federal Government in this region lay in the welfare of Treaty Indians who are their wards. Regulations under the Agreement gave Indians, métis and whites equal rights and security on their community, family or individual traplines. Local trappers' councils were elected by the trappers to act as spokesmen on their behalf when dealing with the Provincial Department of Natural Resources. During the subsequent five years 3,600 live beaver were moved from settled areas to new homes in the northern frontier where they were required for propagation purposes and for the improvement and maintenance of water levels. The result of this action has been a steady increase in the population of beaver, while the take has increased from approximately 400 pelts in 1943-44 to 23,000 in 1952-53.

In 1946, the south Saskatchewan muskrat trapping program was inaugurated. Each trapper in settled areas obtains a permit which describes the area on which he is authorized to trap muskrats and the quota he may take from it—based on the number of houses and bank runs located therein. It is estimated that five muskrats per house will survive a winter and that three may be trapped, leaving the others for propagation. Thus, general close seasons are a thing of the past and muskrats existing in any section can be trapped on the basis of the program. As a result, average yearly production since that date has been almost tripled in relation to the average yearly production for a similar period prior to 1946. The 1953 crop numbered almost 1,000,000 muskrats, the fourth highest ever recorded in the Province.