

Section 2.—Provincial and Territorial Fur Resources and Management*

Newfoundland.—The Province of Newfoundland, stretching 900 miles northward from a latitude of 47° N. has climatic and habitat conditions suited to the raising of wild fur-bearing animals. The Island supports beaver, muskrat, marten, otter, lynx, fox, ermine and mink. Mink are not indigenous to the Island but were introduced since 1935 through animals escaping from mink ranches. The Labrador area also is noted for its fine furs, particularly Labrador mink, and muskrat, marten, otter, beaver, fox, lynx, ermine and red squirrel are numerous enough to warrant trapping.

Wild fur trapping was a basic autumn and winter employment in the Province before World War II but defence construction and maintenance and industrial expansion so changed the economy of the people that trapping is now purely a part time occupation engaged in only when other employment is not available, and few members of the younger generation are now receiving the training necessary to the successful trapper.

Throughout the Province the long haired fur bearers were once the basis of the fur industry and the decline in the prices of their fur was mainly responsible for the decline in trapping. As a result the fox and lynx populations have built up so that they have assumed predator status and are not protected by regulations.

Beaver management was started in 1935 and the Island of Newfoundland was repopulated by the transfer of live animals. This program proved so successful that during four open seasons in the years 1946-53 the catch numbered 30,000 beaver valued at \$550,000. The success of this venture has led to the institution of a similar program in northern Labrador where the area north of the Hamilton River drainage has been without beaver for a hundred years.

Other fur bearers have not been managed except through the usual close seasons provided by regulations; for open seasons, regulations on fur bearing animals differ according to climatic zone and provide for the taking of animals only during that season when the fur quality of the pelt is at its highest.

Prince Edward Island.—Wild fur-bearing animals are very plentiful on Prince Edward Island. Red fox, skunk and raccoon have become so numerous and their depredations among Island poultry flocks so alarming that all protection has been removed and bounties are paid on all three species. Beaver too have increased to the point where they have become a nuisance in this highly agricultural province: they have plugged road and railway culverts and their dams have flooded pulpwood stands and extensive tracts of farmlands. There is now an annual open season on beaver (Nov. 10-Dec. 31) and some trapping permits are issued in the out of season period.

Ten years ago muskrats had become quite scarce but their population has increased and, being so easily trapped, they are now the best revenue producers. More than 3,000 of them are taken annually. Their increase is attributed largely to the shortening of the trapping season from Nov. 1-Mar. 31 to Nov. 10-Dec. 31 and the strict enforcement of trapping regulations, which prohibit the setting of traps within ten feet of a muskrat house or den or the damaging of it. Mink are also increasing in number and are protected by the same shortened trapping season as are muskrat. Mink moreover is the only fur bearing animal ranched to any extent in the Province.

Nova Scotia.—Nova Scotia is not a large producer of wild fur pelts. There is usually a six week open season (Nov. 1-Dec. 31) for mink, otter, weasel and muskrat. The present low market prices for long haired fur has discouraged the trapping of wildcat, fox and raccoon and these animals have been removed from the protected list. For the trapping of fur bearers other than beaver no licence is required.

* Provincial information received from the respective provincial governments and that for the Yukon and Northwest Territories from the Northern Administration and Lands Branch of the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Ottawa.