

Northwest Territories is not only the chief occupation of that immense area but it is the only means of livelihood and existence of the population. Unless the fur trade is maintained an enormous part of the Dominion would be rendered unproductive, and the native inhabitants would either starve to death or become a charge on the Government. That, in brief, is the significance of this problem.

As pioneers in the exploitation of the valuable fur resources of that vast north country, the Hudson's Bay Co., through its well-known posts, has conducted its trade in a manner that would ensure a constant supply of furs. Their trappers were mainly Indians and, to a lesser extent, Eskimos. The Indian trapper is a true conservationist as a rule, inasmuch as he will not, in a region in which he is working, completely exhaust its fur-bearing animals. The Hudson's Bay Co. officers encouraged provident methods, since it was a business necessity, as indeed are all conservation policies. With the advent of the "free trader," however, conditions were changed, and especially so when the foreign trader-trapper entered the country.

Foreign
Trappers and
Use of Poison

The foreign trapper and free trader has no interest in the future of the country. His sole object is to get as much out of it as possible while he is able. His policy is accordingly improvident. In trapping, the chief desire of such a trapper is to "clean up" a piece of territory and move on to another place. The measures he employs are usually as drastic as his policy. One of the worst features of the methods of these men is the use of poison. Ostensibly it is taken into the country for the destruction of wolves, but the real purpose is generally of a wider character, and its extensive use results in a wide distribution of the poison. It is very necessary that the use of poison in the north country should be very greatly restricted and its importation more closely watched and regulated.

Information has recently come into our hands that we are to experience a greater invasion of trappers and fur-traders from the United States than heretofore. Previous knowledge of their methods in Canada and in the United States and Alaska cannot but make one fearful for the future of our fur trade of the north; unless we are willing to sacrifice the only available resource of that north country, and to allow the inhabitants to be deprived of their chief and, in many cases, their only means of livelihood, measures will have to be taken to prevent a dangerous extension of the destructive activities of these foreign trappers and traders, who have, as I have said, no interest in the future of the country; their sole