

THE PRICE OF SEALSKINS.



REPORT has been current among the newspapers that the price of raw sealskins is away down, and Lampson's will not advance over \$5 per skin. When J. D. Allan, of A. A. Allan & Co., was asked concerning this, he termed it as a piece of fabrication of the meanest type, and a report foundationless and untrue. Lampson has not refused to ad-

vance money on sealskins up to the usual amount, which last year averaged about \$10.50 per skin. The advances, most of which are yet to be made, will about equal those of last year, for Lampson's would be quite safe if they got the world's production of seals at \$10 per skin.

Speaking of the world's production, it is smaller than most people imagine, amounting to not over 120,000 skins per year. This is made up principally as follows:

Japan	40,000	(1894 catch.)
Alaska	7,500	(by contract.)
West Coast	20,000	} average.
Lobos Islands	1,500	
Miscellaneous	51,000	

The South Shetland fur seal has almost disappeared, the catch falling from 112,000 in 1800 to 200 in 1887. The South Sea fur seal catch is insignificant. The Alaska seals are, of course, very important. The Victoria seals taken on the north-west coast of British Columbia are quite numerous. The Copper Island, near Kamschatka, is much like the Alaska seal, and a large number are taken. The Robben Island seals are unimportant. The Japanese fur seal is now being taken in large quantities, and the hunting grounds are comparatively new to the commercial world. The West Coast seal is unimportant just now; it inhabits the Farralones Islands, off San Francisco, and St. Barbara and other islands on the coast of California. The Luna fur seal is commercially valueless. The Cape Horn, or Lobos Island seal, is found principally on the Lobos Islands, at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. The Cape of Good Hope fur seals are scarce and of little value. The New Zealand and Australian fur seals have declined from 200,000 a year (about 1815) to a few hundreds each year now. The wool seal is referred to in another article.

With the catch of seals thus limited, the price cannot vary very much so long as there is any demand at all. The United States in good times is the greatest consumer, while Russia is a large consuming power which made itself much felt at the last January sales. France uses a good quantity of miscellaneous furs but very few seals.

Moreover the price of the sealskin depends as much on its dyeing and dressing as on the value of the raw skin, and for this reason also prices cannot decline rapidly.

Nevertheless manufactured seal garments will rule slightly lower than last year, ten per cent. at least. It may go lower than this in some cases, but this will be about the average reduction. The consuming public of this country does not promise at present to take much advantage of this reduction. Still a heavy crop, a revival of trade, and a cold winter may work a radical change and defeat present prospects. Seal gauntlets and caps will be much more inquired after than usual by both sexes.

STYLES IN LADIES' FUR GARMENTS.

Fur capes will be worn very considerably by the female portion of the population, although the tendency to extreme lengths is not so great. As a cold weather garment, the long open cape is not a great success in Canada unless worn over a jacket. Moreover the extreme length makes it less suitable for wear during the cool evenings of summer and fall, as it looks too much out-of-season. Only short capes fill these conditions to satisfaction.

The fact that fur trimmings on dresses and jackets will be worn more than ever, all kinds of furs will be in strong demand. The history of trade teaches this.

Muffs show a tendency to return to the ancient stove-pipe sizes. Great large things like our grandmothers carried are shown. In France they have gone wild in their extreme desires for these articles.

Boas are looking up again, but like large muffs will sell only moderately in Canada.

Ladies' gauntlets will be worn more than ever. Young ladies will wear gray lamb very extensively. For general wear, gray lamb, Persian lamb, beaver and seal will be the leading kinds of fur. The low price of seal will increase the sale of gauntlets of this fur, although it is not quite so serviceable as some of the others.

WOOL SEAL GROWING POPULAR.

Last year wool seal capes were the leading feature of the Canadian fur cape trade, and since that time a marked increase in the demand has also appeared from other countries of the world. The demand for wool seal is thus at present universal. Its long hair makes an excellent appearance in a full-sized cape, and to this fact is due, in a great measure, its popularity.

The wool seal is found in the Arctic seas in the neighborhood of Jan Mayen Island, Greenland and Baffin's Bay, and along the coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland. The leading species is usually called the Greenland seal, the saddle-back or harp seal. The "saddle" is a dark mark on the back of the male animals. When the young Greenland seals are about four to six weeks old they are called Whitecoats, from the long white fur or hair with which they are covered before they take to the water, and which corresponds to the fluff or down on young birds. The woolly nature of this yellowish white fur caused it to be called the wool seal. At six weeks of age it takes to the water, loses its long white fur and takes on a shorter, darker coat, and is then called a "spot."

Great Britain imported 132,762 skins from Greenland in 1891 and 274,995 from Newfoundland in the same year. Newfoundland seal are much flatter in fur than Greenland.

These skins when dyed and dressed are very different to the skin when taken from the animal, and in fact is hardly recognizable except by the length of the woolly hair and the texture of the same.

INNOVATIONS IN MEN'S FURS.

Canadian men are following Europe more and more in their styles. In fur coats there has always been a great contrast between the Canadian and the European plan of wearing them. Following the Esquimaux and Indian style of garb, the Canadian coats have the fur on the outside of the garment, and the