

## CANADIAN FURS - THE BEAVER

The beaver has been the main fur-bearer during much of the history of the Canadian fur-trade. The early Canadian fur-traders found themselves in a land whose forests abounded in beaver from coast to coast and north to the tree-limit.

A strong European demand for the rich underfur for the manufacture of beaver hats encouraged fur-traders to arrange extensive native hunts for beaver. The rodents, which spent most of their lives in and around their lodges, fell easy prey to the hunters. Even in the early years, large areas were quickly emptied of beaver.

The traders were not concerned, believing that there would always be more beaver as trappers and hunters continued to push further west and then north.

Before conservation controls were imposed, unlimited trapping almost eliminated the beaver through-

out much of its former range. However, enlightened wildlife-management techniques, including restocking of depleted areas with beaver from other parts of the country, have been effective in helping the animal to make a comeback.

Today, in fact, the beaver population in Canada is larger than at any time in the last 50 years, despite an annual "take" of pelts during the past decade that was several times larger than the annual output in the 1920s.

Beaver is again the most important Canadian wild fur-bearer, and fur-buyers agree that Canadian beaver is the finest in the world. In the 1967-68 season production amounted to 420,437 pelts valued at \$6,328,648.

### HABITAT

Beaver, the largest of the North American rodents, is found everywhere throughout the forested areas of Canada, in the vicinity of lakes and streams where birch, willow and aspen grow abundantly. Beaver families live in stout lodges with underwater entrances, which they build in streams and in the smaller lakes.

Because fluctuating water levels would make the lodges untenable, beavers build dams to provide a constant water-level.

Beavers lay in their winter supply of food before freeze-up. Their store-house is the bottom of the river or the lake-bed, where they anchor small trees and branches in the mud. During the winter, they pull the wood, piece by piece, into their lodges, where they nibble away the tasty bark before discarding the bared wood.

*(This article is one of a series on the Canadian fur industry and fur-bearing animals.)*



*The Canadian Beaver*

### NEW NATIONAL SCIENCE BODY

A new national scientific organization, known as SCITEC (a contraction of *science* and *technology*) came into being in Ottawa on January 17. Its first president is Dr. N. Grace, president of the Chemical Institute of Canada and general manager of the Dunlop Research Center.

The purpose of SCITEC, according to the founding motion, is, "to marshal the scientific and technological community to provide leadership, to communicate, co-operate and work within itself, with government and the public in the national interests".

Two vice-presidents were elected - Dr. Louis Berlinguet, president of l'Association Canadienne Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences (ACFAS), and Dr. Donald D. Betts, president of the Canadian Association of Physicists. Other executive members

are: Dr. R.C. Quittenton, vice-president of the Engineering Institute of Canada and president of St. Clair College, Windsor; Albert Melancon, associate professor of economics, University of Montreal; and Dr. J.A.F. Stevenson, president of the Biological Council of Canada.

A youth committee was appointed, composed of David Rogers, University of Toronto graduate student; M.J. Yedlin, University of Alberta undergraduate; and Jean-Marc Rousseau, University of Montreal student who is vice-president of Jeunesse Scientifique Inc., the youth division of ACFAS.

Dr. John B. Armstrong, executive director of the Canadian Heart Foundation, was named honorary treasurer, and John H. Hall was named public relations counsel.

There will be initially a congress composed principally of English-speaking members and an