

The periodical fluctuations, which are well known to inhabitants of the Northwest, of such herbivorous animals as mice and rabbits, are accompanied by corresponding fluctuations of their predatory enemies, the carnivorous fur-bearing animals, such as weasels, lynx, foxes, etc. This biological phenomenon, however, is not so simple as it seems, and the biological relationships of the fur-bearing animals to the smaller animals that constitute their food, and the causes governing the periodical increases and decreases of the latter, afford problems of the greatest scientific interest and practical importance. Nevertheless, though in some years the numbers of fur-bearing animals, under natural conditions, may reach a low level, they usually recover and the number caught gradually reaches another high level. If, however, all the fur-bearing animals in a region are systematically and thoroughly exterminated, there can be no recovery. Wild life is irreplaceable once it is destroyed.

There is undoubtedly in Canada a future for fur-farming, provided such operations can be prevented from becoming the object of absurd stock market speculation. But such domestic furs cannot replace the wild furs.

Forest Fires
Destroy Ranges

The total area in which fur-bearing animals can exist in Canada is gradually being diminished in the development of the country. Some of this diminution is unavoidable, but so far as one notable factor in the destruction of the range of fur-bearing animals is concerned, namely, the destruction of our forests by fire, it cannot be claimed to be unavoidable. And it is necessary that we should remember this aspect of the forest fire question, namely, its relation to the abundance of fur-bearing animals. Large areas of the northwest have become unproductive of furs owing to extensive forest fires.

But there are still large areas where the fur-bearing animals live their natural lives and where the surplus is removed by Indian and other local trappers. The supply of these animals will continue, provided they are properly conserved by preventing over-killing in any territory, and by the enforcement of the close seasons and the prohibition of any trade in unprime furs. We believe that this can be accomplished, and if this resource is wisely administered it will continue to render the far north a producing territory, and not the barren, unproductive region that many Canadians are accustomed to picture it, or into which the unrestricted destruction carried on by the foreign trapper would soon convert it.