

## The Fur Trade.

The recent cold nights and chilly days that have so stimulated the dry goods trade will soon bring grist to the mill of the furrier also. Furs are commencing to move in retail and jobbing hands, and it is already evident that fine furs will be a good deal dearer this winter than they were last year. The increasing demand for furs has borne its natural fruit in face of a steadily diminishing supply, and in the case of some furs such as beaver, bear and buffalo, has resulted in an enormous advance in values. It seems certain too that more furs will be worn this season than ever before although not so many fur coats will be purchased but fur-lined coats will rule largely with the better class of trade, and there will be very few overcoats worn without a fur collar or cuffs. There is an increasing demand for fur trimmings from a class of trade that hitherto have been content to wear their winter garments plain, and when this is added to the slow but continuous extinction of fur-bearing animals by their ceaseless pursuit by the fur trapper and the gradual abridging of their habitat by the inroads of civilization, the only wonder is that prices remain within reasonable limits at all. The time certainly cannot be far ahead when furs will be as valuable as jewellery, and this too in face of the beautiful imitations of seal-skin which are everyday offered at lower prices.

For fashionable overcoat-linings mink will be preferred on account of its great durability, its rich appearance, and the lightness of the fur. Next to this black genet is well called for, and muskrat will rule for the cheaper trade. For fur collars and cuffs north shore otter is most stylish, and a mink-lined coat trimmed with this fur will run from \$70 upwards. Persian lamb having been adopted for the higher police officials is naturally out of style, and the other furs of the same value are not sufficiently durable for this purpose. Beaver may be said to be entirely out of the market, as owing to its enormous advance in value the present prices are prohibitive for a fur of this class. Beaver coats which a few years back brought \$50 to \$60 are now worth from \$125 to \$150, and consequently are neglected in favor of furs that are better value for the money.

The finer grade of seal-skins show another advance. The increasing demand, coupled with the restriction as to the number of seals allowed to be killed, has necessitated an increase in values which not even the beautiful seal plushes and sealettes seem able to check. Seal-skin is emphatically the fashionable fur for ladies' jackets, but no regular rule can be laid down for their cut this year as each lady seems to suit the style of her jacket to the length of her purse. It is noticeable however that, when the sum to be expended permits of it, the garment usually reaches nearly to the bottom of the skirt. For muffs seal-skin is also the staple fur, and in the new muffs there is introduced this year a concealed purse, operated by a spring in the interior, which will bid defiance to the purse snatcher. This purse is so beautifully concealed in the fur that until the spring is pressed it is impossible to detect its presence. No new styles are offered in fur caps. The

wedge shape in seal for ladies and in mink for gentlemen will be the ruling style. The dog-stealer and turban shapes will find customers, and for the most expensive trade the sea otter turban with seal crown holds its own in the market. Persian lamb is going out, as it has become so common owing to its durability and freedom from moth that it seems to be entirely relegated to those who wear a fur cap for comfort and not for style. Some effort will be made to use fancy furs such as celestia fox, a fur made by dyeing white fox blue to imitate the genuine blue fox, and opossum for ladies' wedges, but it is not expected that these fancy caps will attract more than a limited section of the trade.

Bear is another fur that has grown enormously in value, principally owing to the heavy European demand. For coats and mantle trimmings bear is much sought for on the other side of the Atlantic, and the high prices paid there have resulted in diverting most of the skins from this market to London. Buffalo too is naturally increasing rapidly in value in view of the practical extermination of this animal by the settlement of the country. Skins which a few years ago were worth five or six dollars are now offered at ten times those sums, and will be worth still more next season, so that we may look for the speedy removal of buffalo from the list of skins ordinarily dealt in.

For sleigh robes musk-ox has taken the place of bear and buffalo in the popular estimation, and probably more musk-ox robes will be seen this winter than ever. For those who have money to spare wolverine robes will be first choice, but their high cost will confine them to the wealthier trade. Raccoon tail and polar bear robes are also offered to the more expensive class of customers, but for ordinary trade wolf, raccoon and musk-ox skins will be the rule.

For expensive cloak linings we have a novelty in the shape of Thibet sheep, a white woolly fur whose principal claim to popularity is the fact of its high cost and the knowledge that it is worn by the Czarina of Russia. A cloak lining of this fur will cost about \$135, and to the uninitiated will appear to be worth about \$5, hence it is hardly likely to be much run upon. The usual assortment of high-priced furs such as silver fox, etc., are offered, but as these are only purchased by very wealthy persons they need no comment from the ordinary purchaser's point of view. Like diamonds, which in their beauty and intrinsic value they much resemble, they are looked upon as too expensive for anything but the wealthy, and hence are not invested in by the average furrier, who leaves them to those whose business it is to cater for this trade. - *Montreal Journal of Commerce.*

David Philip, of Winnipeg, leaves to-day for Brandon, where he will embark in the hardware business.

H. J. WOODSIDE, jeweller, Portage la Prairie and Carberry, Man., has sold out his business at Carberry to A. E. Hayward.

ALEX McDONALD & Robert Young, of Winnipeg, have formed a partnership and will carry on a financial and commission business here.

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