

CHAPTER VIII.—AGRICULTURE.

Agriculture, including stock raising and horticulture, is the chief single industry of the Canadian people, employing, in 1931, 28·7 p.c. of the total gainfully occupied population and 33·9 p.c. or over one-third of the gainfully occupied males. In addition, it provides the raw material for many Canadian manufactures, and its products in raw or manufactured form constitute a very large percentage of Canadian exports. For a statement of the occupied and the available agricultural lands in Canada, see p. 54 of this volume.

This chapter treats of current governmental activities in connection with agriculture, including those of the Dominion and Provincial Experimental Stations. Statistics of agriculture follow, including agricultural revenue and wealth, field crops, farm live stock and poultry, dairying, fur farming, fruit, special crops, farm labour and wages, prices, miscellaneous, and, since Canadian exports of agricultural commodities are sold in the world market, a review of world statistics of agriculture, compiled from the publications of the International Institute of Agriculture.

Section 1.—The Government in Relation to Agriculture.*

It is provided in Section 95 of the British North America Act that "in each province the Legislature may make laws in relation to agriculture in the province"; it is also "declared that the Parliament of Canada may from time to time make laws in relation to agriculture in all or any of the provinces; and any law of the Legislature of a province relative to agriculture . . . shall have effect in and for the province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any Act of the Parliament of Canada"

As a result of this provision, there exist at the present time Departments of Agriculture, with Ministers of Agriculture at their heads, both in the Dominion and in each of the nine provinces, though in two provinces the portfolio of agriculture is combined with one or more other portfolios in the hands of a single Minister. A short sketch of the functions of the Dominion Department was published at pp. 212-223 of the 1936 Year Book.

Subsection 1.—Agricultural Progress in Canada and the Dominion Experimental Farms System.

The Beginnings of Agriculture in Canada.—The first agricultural operations in what is now the Dominion of Canada were the small patches of Indian corn grown by the Indians near their main settlements.

The earliest attempts at permanent European settlement in Canada were intended as agricultural settlements. At Port Royal, now Annapolis, in Nova Scotia, the French under de Monts in 1605 cultivated patches of land, and cows were brought to the settlement by Poutrincourt in 1606. Similarly, in the valley of the St. Lawrence, farming on a small scale appears to have been carried on as early as 1608 by Champlain, the founder of Quebec, when cattle were imported and some grains grown. The first real farmer along the St. Lawrence, however, was Louis Hébert, who landed at Quebec in 1617. He was followed in the next 30 years by other settlers who devoted themselves wholly to farming and established agricultural settlements at Three Rivers and Montreal.

* This Section, with the exception of Subsection 2, has been revised by the Dominion Department of Agriculture. The information in Subsection 2 was checked by the various provincial authorities.