

CHAPTER VIII.—AGRICULTURE.

CONSPECTUS.

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Agriculture, including stock raising and horticulture, is the most important 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. 18 of this volume.

An introductory outline of the historical background of Canadian agriculture is given at pp. 187-190 of the 1939 Year Book. As now presented this chapter treats of current governmental activities—Dominion, in as much detail as space will permit (to utilize such space to the best advantage, the system of special articles not repeated from year to year has been adopted) and Provincial, by outlines and references to provincial sources of information. Comprehensive statistics of agriculture, collected and compiled by the Agricultural Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and covering Canada as a whole, close the chapter. These include data on values of agricultural production and farm capital, field crops, farm live stock and poultry, dairying, fruit, special crops, 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.—Government in Relation to Agriculture.

It is provided in Sect. 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.