

Subsection 1.—The Dominion Government

Subjects already dealt with in previous editions of the Year Book under this heading are: the Functions of the Dominion Department of Agriculture; the Dominion Experimental Farms System; the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Program; the Historical Background of Canadian Agriculture; Noxious Forest Insects and Their Control and Agricultural Marketing Legislation, 1939. See list of special articles at the front of this edition.

SOME EFFECTS OF THE WAR ON CANADIAN AGRICULTURE*

At the outbreak of hostilities in September, 1939, Canada's position with respect to agricultural supplies that might be needed for war purposes was much more favourable than it had been at the beginning of the War of 1914-18. To take only two examples: the area devoted to wheat production, which, under stimulus of active war demand for the product, had expanded from 10,300,000 acres in 1914 to 17,300,000 in 1918, stood at 26,700,000 in 1939; the hog population, almost exactly the same at the beginning of 1939 as it had been at the end of 1918, expanded so rapidly during the year, because of plentiful feed supplies, that increase in numbers during 1939 equalled the total increase in the four years of the War of 1914-18.

Only in the acreages devoted to such relatively minor crops as peas, beans, buckwheat and flaxseed was marked reduction apparent as compared with 1918; only in the cases of bacon, dairy products and fibre flax did it appear that larger quantities than had normally been taken would be required by the United Kingdom; on the other hand, the increased production of tobacco and apples as compared with that of 1918 presented problems in disposal of surpluses rather than problems of supply.

It soon became apparent, then, that the danger of scarcity during the present war was less than that of having to deal with large agricultural surpluses at the end of the War; hence, when machinery was set up to give direction in Canada's war-time agricultural program, the aim was also to minimize the problems of post-war agricultural adjustment.

With this latter point in mind, it was decided to use, as far as possible, the regular services of the Dominion and Provincial Departments of Agriculture, enlisting as well the co-operation of producer and trade representatives. An Agricultural Supplies Board composed of the seven senior officers of the Dominion Department of Agriculture was established, therefore, to act as the central directive agency of Canada's war-time agricultural program, with power to appoint advisory committees representative of producers and the trade; while in each province, production committees, made up of producer representatives, provincial officials and Dominion fieldmen, were set up to collaborate with the Board and to implement its suggestions. The central Board was given power, among other things, to buy, sell, store, distribute or regulate the distribution of supplies for use in agricultural production, and to recommend the withholding of licences for the export of such supplies, while sub-committees were appointed to assist the Board in matters pertaining to supplies of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, and to aid in the disposal of surplus fruits and vegetables.

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