

Fishermen's Co-operatives.—Co-operation among fishermen on Canada's Atlantic and Pacific Coasts is of recent origin. The Department of Fisheries records the establishment of co-operative associations among fishermen on the Atlantic Coast in 1924, the first of which was organized at Tignish in Prince Edward Island. No further organization was reported until 1930 when societies were formed in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. From that year the number of societies increased each year until in 1941 there were 63 operating in the Maritime Provinces out of a total of 77 associations reported as operating in Canada. These figures do not include any associations that operated from the mainland of the Province of Quebec but do include 9 societies in the Magdalen Islands.

On the west coast there were 5 fishermen's co-operatives operating in 1941. Two had been in operation for 15 years, one for 10 years and 2 were of recent origin.

Total capital invested in the 77 associations amounted to \$281,752. Total volume of business done by these associations amounted to \$2,645,698. Estimated membership in all associations reporting was approximately 4,500.

Fishermen's co-operative associations in Canada are engaged in other activities than the marketing or processing of fish. On both coasts the fishermen pool their purchases of fishing gear and nets through their marketing associations. On the east coast particularly, many groups operate co-operative stores which supply the members with household necessities such as groceries, meats and dairy products.

Subsection 2.—Consumers' Co-operation

Most people think of consumers' co-operation as exemplified by co-operative retail distributive societies operating in the field of consumers' goods and services. To a great extent this is true in Canada for consumers' co-operation in this country has not been attempted in many fields other than retail distribution.

The history of consumers' co-operation in Canada has not been encouraging. As mentioned above some of the earliest efforts at co-operation in Canada were in the field of consumers' co-operation. The one society that has a continuous record of successful operation is the British-Canadian Co-operative Society Limited, at Sydney Mines, N.S. This society began business in 1906 with a single small store at Sydney Mines and now operates branch stores at North Sydney, Glace Bay, Florence and Cranberry. The society handles groceries, dry goods, meats, men's wear and also operates a bakery, a dairy and a tailoring department. For the past 35 years this society has been one of the most successful examples of consumers' co-operation in Canada and on the continent.

In the past it has been difficult to obtain records of consumers' co-operative stores in Canada for many reasons. One was the lack of uniform legislation. Another was the absence of a single agency capable of covering the whole country. A third was the inability of the leaders of the movement to decide on an acceptable definition of a consumers' society. The first two of these have now been removed. Every province now has adequate legislation for co-operative societies and in most cases any new organization must incorporate under the present Act, which in nearly every case has proved quite acceptable to most co-operators.

The 1941 Census enumerated all co-operative stores and merchandising concerns in the country. Statistics on the extent of consumers' co-operation in Canada are readily available for most provinces but unfortunately they have never been brought together to present a Dominion-wide picture except for the census years. The only figures for Canada are to be found in the annual report of the Co-operative Union but these include only the societies affiliated with the Union, which are but a small percentage of the estimated total.