

farmers appear to have more than reached the limit of their present productive capacity. Throughout five war years, farmers have continued to meet the challenge of ever-increasing production. This has been accomplished despite the shortage of farm labour and difficulties of obtaining needed farm machinery. In the Prairie Provinces, however, where much of the increased production of live stock and live-stock products has originated, there has been recent evidence of some return to the less arduous production of wheat.

An important development in Canadian agriculture during 1944 was the passage of the Agricultural Prices Support Act. This provides for the setting up of a Board which will come into active operation at the conclusion of the War to tide farmers over the transition period of adjusting production back to a peacetime basis.

Farm Labour.—Almost from the start of the War, young men and women have gone from farms to the Armed Services and to industry in such numbers that those on the land have been obliged to toil longer and harder than ever before. At June 1, 1944, the number of males working on Canadian farms was only 1,000,000 as compared with 1,210,000 on June 1, 1939. Of the current million agricultural workers, many are not constantly on the land but are employed part time in packing plants and in lumber woods. In 1944, farmers continued to receive some assistance from high school students during an extended summer vacation, and this assistance of unskilled but youthful helpers will probably be available in 1945. Home defence troops who have helped to harvest fruit and tobacco crops are not likely to be available again during the course of the War.

Grain Crops.—Encouraged by acreage payments on land taken out of wheat production, the area sown to this crop declined appreciably in the three years prior to 1944. In the latter year, however, wheat acreage was sharply increased, contributing factors being the important export demand and better prices. In the autumn of 1943 the initial price rose from 90 cents to \$1.25 per bu. No. 1 Northern, in store at Fort William. Increase in wheat acreage was made at some expense to the production of flaxseed, and was followed by a slight shift away from live-stock production. The estimated acreage sown to wheat in 1944 was 23,284,000 acres, and for 1945 a reduction is sought to a figure of 21,500,000 acres, coupled with an increase of about 500,000 acres in summerfallow.

Oilseed crop production in Canada in 1944 showed a substantial reduction. Although acreages for soybeans, sunflowers and rapeseed were maintained or increased, the flaxseed area was reduced to about 1,300,000 acres, compared with 2,900,000 in 1943.

In the crop year 1943-44 a record volume of western wheat and feed grains was moved into the eastern provinces and British Columbia under the Dominion Freight Assistance Policy. The poor crop harvested in many sections of Eastern Canada in 1943 and the high levels of live-stock production created an emergency which would have been serious had not large surplus grain stocks existed in grain elevators and on western farms. In 1944, the eastern harvest was much improved over the previous year and requirements for western grain will be considerably reduced in 1944-45.

Bacon Hogs.—With a two-year bacon contract with United Kingdom giving them assurance of a steady demand, hog producers marketed in 1944, through inspected plants, an all-time high number of hogs, estimated at 8,800,000 compared