

The first efforts in connection with dairy production were exceedingly primitive. Cheese and butter were made on farms to provide food for the occupants, and limited quantities were sold to others in nearby towns and villages. Improvements in technique were developed, however, which improved the quality and gave the producers a wider sale for the product; although the lack of transportation and inadequate storage facilities continued to limit its distribution. Since cheese made on farms could be more conveniently stored, the production of this commodity was rapidly extended. In 1764, six tons of cheese were exported from Nova Scotia and the census records of 1861 show a production of 3,000,000 lb. in Upper Canada. In 1865, farm-produced cheese from this section of the British colony won a silver medal at the world exhibition in Paris. The first cheese factory was built in Oxford county in 1864, and by 1867, 234 factories were manufacturing cheddar cheese, a product which was destined to give the Canadian dairying industry an important place in world commerce. By 1891, the census reported 1,565 cheese factories in operation in the Dominion, 893 of which were located in Ontario and 617 in Quebec. According to the Census of 1901 this number had increased during the intervening years to 2,389, and in addition there were 558 making both butter and cheese. The production for the previous year was estimated at 220,000,000 lb.

Butter production owes its development to the invention of the cream separator (1880), the Babcock system of testing cream (1890) and the introduction of pasteurization at the beginning of the present century. The fact that the cream-gathering system permitted skim milk to be kept at home for live-stock feeding, gave it immediate favour among farmers; for at a time when the western expansion was at its height, the demand for meat products could not be overlooked by farmers in the older sections of the Dominion. The Census of 1911 showed the effect of creamery competition. Indeed, judging from the export movement which reached its peak (234,000,000 lb.) during the fiscal year ended Mar. 31, 1904, it would appear that this must be regarded as the turning point in cheese production. During the period 1910 to 1920 this transitory movement from cheese to butter was definitely in evidence and, with the exception of the war years of 1916 to 1918 when there was an increased demand for cheese in Britain, the trend in cheese manufacture was continually downward.

Milk Production and Utilization.—The dairy industry of Canada made its greatest development after the close of the War of 1914-18, when the demand for food products, following the cessation of hostilities in Europe, gave birth to new outlets for dairy products. From 1920 to 1925 the numbers of cows kept mainly for milking purposes advanced from 2,986,000 to 3,273,000. Likewise, the production of milk moved up from 10,976,000,000 lb. to 13,421,000,000 lb. A continuous decline in the dairy cow population was shown during the next five years, although milk production did not reach its peak until 1926. An interesting fact revealed by these statistics is that the upward trend in dairying took place during a time when other lines of farming were suffering reverses. This was particularly evident after the fall in prices of grains and live stock, late in 1920. When abundant grain crops were harvested in subsequent years (1926 to 1928) a slump in dairy production occurred. This downward trend continued from 1926 to 1929, when