

Subsection 2.—Principal Commodities Imported and Exported

Canada's Principal Imports.—In the interpretation of the trends in imports, it should be borne in mind that no individual year is entirely free of abnormalities in some particulars. In the matter of price fluctuations, which affect the significance of trade figures when expressed by value, the Bureau of Statistics index number of wholesale prices, on the 1926 base, was 59·3 in the calendar year 1889, 52·1 in 1899, 59·5 in 1909, 134·0 in 1919, 86·6 in 1930, 82·9 in 1940, 90·0 in 1941, 95·6 in 1942 and 100·0 in 1943.

The effect of both long- and short-term fluctuations on the trends of trade is summarized at pp. 425-426 of the 1941 Year Book and a table at pp. 426-427 of that volume gives comparative figures of imports for five decades to 1939, the latest year for which comparisons can be made upon a peacetime basis.

At pp. 463-464 of the 1942 Year Book, the impact of the War on the trade of 1940 is discussed. In that year the five leading imports were machinery (except farm), rolling-mill products, coal, crude petroleum and automobile parts. In 1943 the five leading imports were composed of the same groups, although the order had changed, machinery (except farm) again stood in first place, followed by coal, automobile parts, crude petroleum and rolling-mill products. This would indicate that Canada's requirements in the way of machine tools required for war production had been great and that production for war purposes was in full swing in 1943; the value of such imports was highest in 1941, although the 1943 figure was 48·2 p.c. above 1940. The increase in the value of coal imports in 1943 over 1940 was 104 p.c. and automobile parts showed an increase of 41·1 p.c., a little below the peak of 1942. Although normal civilian driving was severely restricted in 1943, military and commercial requirements of gasoline necessitated the importing of crude petroleum to a point 37 p.c. above the value recorded in 1940. Cotton goods and electrical apparatus advanced to sixth and seventh places from twelfth and eleventh, respectively, in 1940, showing increases in value of 172·1 p.c. for cotton goods and 128·4 p.c. for electrical apparatus.

All of the remaining commodities, imports of which were valued at \$5,000,000 or over in 1943, registered increases with the following exceptions, arranged in order of value in 1943 and showing the percentage decrease as compared with 1940 in parentheses: sugar and products (11·0); rubber products (34·7); farm implements (34·1); furs (3·1); noils, tops and waste wool (44·6); and unmanufactured wood (19·5).

13.—Leading Imports Over Three Decades, 1920-43

NOTE.—Commodities are arranged in order of importance in 1943, and include only those valued at \$5,000,000 or more.

Commodity	1920 ¹	1930	1940	1941	1942	1943
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Machinery, except farm.....	36,716,791	50,434,725	71,496,542	130,436,631	71,602,594	105,953,513
Coal.....	60,072,629	56,694,366	49,630,132	61,588,041	81,851,219	101,245,455
Automobile parts.....	12,674,823	23,353,763	47,580,369	71,545,314	76,420,704	67,118,013
Petroleum, crude.....	20,306,693	41,362,227	48,373,401	56,506,795	57,526,771	66,430,545
Rolling-mill products.....	39,985,746	46,508,984	55,610,396	60,743,246	81,137,616	65,595,967
Cotton goods.....	49,088,060	21,924,835	19,417,177	33,984,942	48,443,357	52,837,415
Electrical apparatus.....	15,550,254	30,281,152	21,250,135	28,177,952	28,174,113	48,541,588

¹ Fiscal year.