

were expected. Most of the articles were of minor importance in the family budget, and in a number of cases it was becoming questionable if the effort and expense of effective administration would be commensurate with the benefits derived.

Price ceilings were suspended and not eliminated, so that they could be reimposed if unreasonable increases occurred. A survey of prices in the principal cities, taken before the suspension and repeated periodically thereafter, showed that there had been few significant price increases, except in the case of silverware which reflected the higher price of silver itself.

Supply Controls.—As indicated above, there were still severe shortages in Canada in the period of reconversion, but civilian production was increasing and, in contrast to the war situation, the aim of Government policy was to encourage the rapid expansion of civilian activity. Wartime controls which had restricted or prohibited particular kinds of civilian production were therefore not suited to the changed conditions of the transition period. Most of these controls were removed before the end of the War; their removal began in the latter half of 1944 and shortly after V-E Day very few of them remained. Where production of essential civilian goods was inadequate, reliance was placed upon positive measures designed to increase the type of production needed (e.g., the directive program for textiles, see p. 576) rather than upon negative restrictions.

The Prices Board also co-operated with other departments in gradually removing emergency restrictions on external trade, though a number of controls over exports had to be retained, as indicated above, in order to protect essential domestic needs and to maintain effective price control. The Board did, however, recommend the removal of export control over a number of commodities which were becoming available in adequate quantities. The Board also worked closely with the Department of Trade and Commerce in establishing export allocations for commodities in short supply, (e.g., lumber and textile products).

In the fields of food and textiles, where the most serious shortages continued in the reconversion period, the Board maintained important supply and distribution controls (see pp. 574-578). World demand for Canadian pulp and paper products increased sharply with the end of the War, and some controls over exports and over the allocation of supplies to domestic uses had to be continued. Control over newsprint and pulp exports was abandoned at the end of 1945, but the domestic allocation of pulp, newsprint, other papers and paperboard remained under a simplified form of control. While most simplification and standardization orders were withdrawn, the orders standardizing weights and grades of fine papers and paperboard remained as a means of ensuring maximum production.

The shortages of building materials became increasingly serious in 1945, owing to labour shortages and to the high volume of construction. The Wartime Prices and Trade Board assisted manufacturers in obtaining labour and, in some cases, authorized price adjustments to stimulate production. In January, 1946, responsibility for the supply of building materials was transferred to the Department of Reconstruction and Supply.

In the sphere of metal goods all Prices Board controls were removed except the restrictions on the use of metal containers, which were necessitated by the continuing shortage of tin. As a result of the serious supply problems in steel arising from the steel and coal strikes early in 1946, the Steel Control, which had been disbanded in 1943 was reinstated in the Department of Reconstruction and Supply.