

CHAPTER IX.—AGRICULTURE

CONSPECTUS

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NOTE.—The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.

Agriculture is one of Canada's leading primary industries and is of particular importance to the economy of the country. Special articles that have appeared in previous Year Books dealing with the historical development of agriculture and with significant features of that progress are listed in Chapter XXIX under the heading "Special Material Published in Former Editions of the Year Book" The following article covers, briefly, trends in the postwar period.

POSTWAR AGRICULTURE*

The trends in postwar agriculture have been quite well marked. A larger over-all output of agricultural products has been accomplished with a reduced labour force. Canada's population has increased to more than 16,500,000, about 34 p.c. since 1946, and industry generally has been able to absorb quite readily the annual increment of new workers entering the labour force from natural increase in the adult population and from immigration. This buoyant activity, together with little unemployment, has resulted in steady and advancing incomes and therefore in active demand for almost all classes of commodities including foods. Thus the domestic market has utilized a much larger proportion of the increased output of agricultural products, bringing about a change in the prewar pattern of Canada's agricultural export trade.

Agricultural Production.—As already stated, the volume of agricultural production increased considerably over the postwar period. The index of physical volume, calculated on the basis of 1935-39 equalling 100, stood at 165.3 for 1956 as compared with 125.6 for 1946. Fluctuations registered in the interval were attributable in large measure to the size of the western grain crop. But even allowing for the years of bumper grain production, there was a consistent increase in the output of almost all agricultural products.

* Prepared under the direction of Dr. J. G. Taggart, C.B.E., Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa.