

Subsection 3.—Field Crops

There were marked regional contrasts in crop-growing conditions throughout Canada during 1961. Crops in the Prairie Provinces turned out only fair to poor, with many areas experiencing complete failures, while in Eastern Canada outturns were good to excellent with a number of crops in Ontario establishing record high yields per acre. The prairies received enough moisture to produce crops equal to the recent 10-year average in 1960, but rainfall during the fall months was light. Generally cool spring weather in 1961 accompanied by rain and snow provided adequate moisture to germinate crops but dry conditions and above-average temperatures appeared in early June and continued with little respite during July and August. Conditions generally were the worst in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Much of the northern half of Alberta and parts of the southwest received rains in time to produce fair to good crops, but in the southeast corner most crops were a failure. As a result, average yields of wheat were reduced to half those of the preceding year.

Growing conditions during the late summer months were nearly ideal over most of Ontario and western Quebec. Ample rainfall and adequate heat caused rank crop development and many farmers experienced difficulty with lodging of small grains, but grass and fodder crops made excellent growth and good crops of corn and soybeans were produced. Summer drought retarded crop development in much of eastern Quebec and the Maritimes resulting in outturns a little below average. Most of British Columbia experienced good growing and harvesting conditions.

After registering declines in the two preceding years, total supplies of the five major grains increased again in 1960-61. Farmers' marketings of wheat, oats, barley, rye and flaxseed amounted to 546,606,000 bu. representing a rise of 6 p.c. over the 1959-60 total of 516,695,000 bu. The 1960-61 deliveries, however, were considerably short of the record 1952-53 crop year total of 844,855,000 bu. and 9 p.c. less than the ten-year (1949-50—1958-59) average of 602,405,000 bu. Exports of the same five grains, combined with their respective milled and processed products, reached 419,324,000 bu., an increase of 15 p.c. over the 1959-60 total of 364,136,000 bu. and 1 p.c. higher than the ten-year average of 414,200,000 bu. In addition to exports, disappearance of these grains into domestic channels in 1960-61 was estimated at some 785,687,000 bu. compared with 765,964,000 bu. in the preceding year. The combined effect of expanded exports and domestic requirements more than offset a larger total supply and, as a result, carryover stocks were down from 763,513,000 bu. at July 31, 1960 to 744,486,000 bu. at the same date of 1961. Production of wheat, oats, barley, rye and flaxseed in the 1961 season, reflecting the severe drought conditions of the mid-west, was estimated at 740,304,000 bu., a decrease of 38 p.c. from the production of the previous year. Thus, with declines recorded for both carryover and production, total domestic supplies of the five grains for 1961-62 declined to 1,484,800,000 bu. from 1,949,500,000 bu. in 1960-61.

The potato crop totalled 45,300,000 cwt. in 1961 compared with 45,500,000 cwt. in 1960, a 6-p.c. increase in acreage being nearly offset by a similar decrease in average yield per acre. Ontario became established as the largest potato-growing province and average yields per acre in that province, at a record 188.4 cwt., were the highest in Canada.

The rapeseed crop largely escaped the effects of the drought, being produced mainly in the more favoured areas of northern Alberta and Saskatchewan, and established a new record in 1961 of 558,000,000 lb. compared with 556,000,000 lb. in the previous year and the 1955-59 average of 275,400,000 lb. The soybean crop, most of which is grown in Ontario, established new production and yield-per-acre records in 1961. The total of 8,700,000 bu. produced was 53 p.c. higher than the 1960 total of 5,700,000 bu. and an average yield per acre of 31.8 bu. compared with 22.1 bu. in 1960. Production of tame hay and fodder corn at 25,700,000 tons also reached a new high in 1961 but supplies were distributed unevenly, Eastern Canada harvesting record crops while the prairie region suffered from shortages.