

to 11.6 p.c. in 1930, and during the 1931-53 period fluctuated from a low of 8.0 p.c. in 1931 to a high of 12.5 p.c. in 1948 and 1951. Since 1953, agriculture's share has been less than 7.5 p.c., reaching a low of 4.6 p.c. in 1961 but recovering to 5.5 p.c. in 1962.

Upon examination of the agriculture industry itself, an indication of the technological change that has occurred in Canadian agriculture is reflected in the decrease in the number of farms and the corresponding increase in the average size of farm. These changes are tied in with increased farm mechanization which has enabled the farm operator to operate a larger farm with the same amount of labour or less. Also, the larger farm area reduces per-acre machine costs and is one of the ways that the farmer can offset the steady increase in the cost of farm machinery.

**Number and Size of Farms.**—The declining trend in the number of farms in Canada, which was first evident in the 1941-51 decade, continued in the latest intercensal period, 1956-61. A total of 480,903 farms was recorded in the 1961 Census for all Canada, 16.4 p.c. fewer than the corresponding total of 575,015 farms in 1956 and 22.8 p.c. fewer than the 1951 total of 623,091 farms. A peak total of 732,832 farms was recorded in the 1941 Census. Part of the reduction in the number of farms between 1956 and 1961 was attributable to a change in farm definition. (In 1961, a farm was defined as a holding of one acre or more with sales of agricultural products during the past 12 months of \$50 or more.)\* It is estimated that 40,731 holdings were not classified as farms in 1961 for this reason. Thus, without the change in farm definition, there would have been a reduction of 9.3 p.c. in the number of farms from 1956 to 1961. Including the effect of the change in farm definition, the greatest decrease in number of farms took place in the Atlantic Region where the 33,391 farms in 1961 represented a decrease of 47.6 p.c. from the number recorded in 1951. In the other regions, however, the percentage reductions were much less. In the Central Region the decrease was 23.6 p.c. to a total of 217,110 farms in 1961, in the Prairie Region it was 15.4 p.c. to 210,442 farms, and in British Columbia, 24.5 p.c. to 19,934 farms.

Historically, large increases in farm area were recorded from 1911 to 1941, during which period the total rose from 108,968,715 acres to 173,563,282 acres. This increase was attributable mainly to the agricultural development of the Prairie Region and since 1941 the total farm area of the country has changed little. In 1961 it amounted to 172,551,051 acres, slightly less than the record high of 174,046,654 acres recorded in 1951. During the 1911-61 period, some regional differences prevailed. In the Atlantic Region (excluding Newfoundland), the total farm area gradually declined each census year from 11,000,808 acres in 1911 to 5,444,788 acres in 1961. The experience in this region was that large areas of land brought under cultivation at the turn of the century proved to be submarginal for agricultural purposes and were later abandoned as farm land. In the Provinces of Quebec and Ontario, the farm area increased from 37,785,052 acres in 1911 to a high of 40,450,545 acres in 1941, after which it declined to 32,776,999 acres in 1961. In the Prairie Provinces, the farm area of 57,642,844 acres in 1911 rose to 129,814,122 acres in 1961; while the largest increases occurred during the 1911-41 period, those recorded in recent census years for the Prairie Region have largely offset the acreage decreases recorded in the Eastern Provinces. The amount of farm land in British Columbia, reported as 2,540,011 acres in 1911, increased steadily to 4,702,274 acres in 1951 but dropped back to 4,506,552 acres in 1961.

As already stated, relatively large increases occurred in average size of farm (in terms of acreage) during the 1951-61 decade, although again it should be noted that a contributing factor for this particular period was the change in farm definition which resulted in fewer farms in 1961. The average size of farm for the Atlantic Region in 1961 was 163 acres compared with 123 acres in 1951; for the Central Region, the average size was 151 acres in 1961 and 133 acres in 1951; for the Prairie Provinces it was 617 acres, 119 acres above the 1951 figure; and for British Columbia 226 acres compared with 178 acres. Another indication of the increasing size of farm was the value of sales reported for the farms. In 1961,

\* See also p. 476.