

fairly quickly. If and when this happens a reorientation of external trade in agricultural products will be inevitable and the results to Canada will be far-reaching.

In many ways, therefore, the present may be regarded as a turning point and for this reason the various special articles that have appeared over the past few years have been summarized below with the purpose of presenting the salient features in the developments of Canadian agriculture during the war years, so that the student will be in a position to make comparisons and draw his conclusions with greater facility.

When war broke out in 1939, the position of Canadian agriculture was much more favourable with respect to the supplying of wartime food needs than had been the case at the beginning of the War in 1914. In the interval between the two wars the acreage devoted to cereals and other field crops had increased greatly while live-stock production had also made important gains. On the other hand, the outbreak of hostilities disrupted the normal marketing of many products and created a number of problems in the adjustment of agriculture from a peacetime to a wartime basis.

One of the first acts of the Dominion Government was the setting up of the Agricultural Supplies Board. The purpose of the Board was to keep agriculture functioning in a manner which would supply the food and fibre needs of the people of Canada and her Allies during the period of the War and leave the Canadian farmer, so far as possible, in a position to follow his normal program when peace returned.

Composed of senior officers of the Dominion Department of Agriculture, the Board had a two-fold responsibility, viz., to see that the needed foodstuffs were produced in sufficient quantities, and to secure and conserve the supplies needed by producers and processors in carrying out their share of the program. The Board was to serve as the central directive agency to deal with problems in connection with the production and marketing of farm products. It was given power to buy and sell, store, regulate the distribution of supplies used in production, to recommend the licences for the export of such supplies, and to appoint advisory committees representative of producers and the trade.

At the outset the Board enlisted the co-operation of the provinces and instituted a series of conferences with provincial representatives, first at frequent intervals and later annually, where production programs were planned in the light of known requirements. Representatives of the organized farmers and of the farm press were also invited to attend and take part in the conferences.

During the early months of the War there was no important increase in demand for any Canadian farm product. Indeed the chief problems were those of disposing of surpluses rather than of stimulating production. True, Britain had negotiated agreements for increased quantities of Canadian bacon and cheese and, in order to implement these agreements, Canada set up two additional boards, a Bacon Board, which later extended its activities to other meats as well and became known as a Meat Board, and a Dairy Products Board. Still later when the United Kingdom became interested in large shipments of Canadian eggs, flax fibre and other products, a Special Products Board was set up to handle these commodities.

In March, 1943, the Department of Agriculture undertook additional responsibilities in connection with the supply and distribution of food products and these were followed by the setting up of the Agricultural Food Board. The purpose of this