

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS IN ORGANIZATION AND POLICY OF THE FEDERAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Canada's first move to organize for the promotion of agriculture was made more than a century ago. By Act of the Legislature of the Province of Canada, passed on Nov. 10, 1852, provision was made for setting up a Bureau of Agriculture, under a Minister of the Crown. This Bureau later became a department, forerunner of the Department of Agriculture of to-day. In addition to general agriculture, the Bureau concerned itself with agricultural statistics and registration (including the Census), and with patents and inventions. Later it was given responsibility for immigration and the building of colonization roads.

The Early Days.—The present Department of Agriculture was established by Act of the new Parliament of Canada, following Confederation in 1867. Little progress was made during the first few years but, under an Act passed in 1869, attention was directed to the safeguarding of Canadian live stock against the introduction of contagious diseases. By 1884, inspection and quarantine stations had been established all along the International Boundary and at Atlantic seaports. Attention was also being given to the eradication of diseases already in the country and the first entomologist was appointed in 1884 to investigate the ravages of crop-destroying insects.

In 1885, preliminary steps were taken to set up the experimental farms organization and Parliament passed an Act in 1886 respecting Experimental Farm Stations. This provided for a central farm at Ottawa, Ont., and branch farms at Nappan, N.S., Brandon, Man., Indian Head, N.W.T., and Agassiz, B.C. Dr. William Saunders was appointed the first Director.

Departmental organization at this time comprised only two branches dealing specifically with agriculture—Experimental Farms and Veterinary. In 1890, the first Dairy Commissioner was appointed to aid farmers in the improvement of butter and cheese manufacture and in the better feeding of dairy cattle for milk production. A Dairy Products Act, passed in 1893, made provision for the branding of dairy products and for prohibiting the sale of filled or imitation cheese.

In 1895, the possibilities of the British market as an outlet for Canadian produce began to attract attention. Arrangements were made for shipments of butter and cheese under refrigeration and these proved highly successful but similar efforts with fruit shipments were less satisfactory.

Early regulatory legislation administered by the Department included measures providing for the registration of cheese factories and creameries in 1897, for the control of insect pests (San José scale) in 1898, for the incorporation of live-stock record associations in 1900, and the Fruit Marks Act in 1901. In 1903, provision was made for the inspection of seeds and testing for purity and germination. Cow-testing was begun in 1904 and the Animal Contagious Diseases Act was amended to provide compensation for the owners of live stock slaughtered under the Act. At the 1906-07 Session of Parliament an Act was passed to encourage the establishment of cold-storage warehouses for perishable food products and the Meat and Canned Foods Act was brought in at the same time. The Destructive Insect and Pest Act was passed in 1910.

In the early years of the 20th century the departmental organization gradually developed: in 1905, the seed and live-stock divisions were withdrawn from the Dairy Branch and set up as separate branches; in 1912, the Census and Statistics office was transferred to the Department of Trade and Commerce; the Agricultural