

Subsection 3.—Protection and Grading

Unlike manufactured articles, even close scrutiny of most agricultural products is little help in determining their purity as food, or their value to the farmer for further production. Obviously products used as food must be pure and healthful and must satisfy standards of quality established for them. If agriculture is to be conducted on a sound basis, the supplies farmers buy—seeds, feeds, fertilizers and pesticides—also must carry a guarantee that they will be as represented. Much of the research and experimental work would be of no avail if legislation were not provided to see that the end-product of such work was satisfactory. In addition Canada's livestock, crops and trees must be protected from diseases that might be introduced with importations or that might originate in Canada.

These protective and grading services are a most important part of the work of two sections of the Department of Agriculture: the Production Service and the Marketing Service. Generally the protective features and the grading to standards or approval of analyses of farm supplies come under the Production Service. The grading of most food products is the responsibility of the Marketing Service. Legislative authority to impose protective and grading services is derived from about 20 Acts or their accompanying Regulations.

Health of Animals.—The protection of the health of Canada's livestock is a most important service. To guard against the introduction of contagious diseases from foreign lands stringent regulations are enforced by the Health of Animals Division covering the importation of livestock, livestock products and even packing material and litter. Provision is also made for the control or eradication of animal diseases developing within Canada. Programs directed at the eventual eradication of such diseases as bovine tuberculosis and brucellosis are a continuing part of the work. The Division is responsible for the inspection of animals slaughtered for food and post-mortem examination is made of all carcasses in the course of slaughter and dressing before the meat is approved for human consumption. Sanitary conditions in packing plants and slaughter houses come under review and all canned meats must meet high standards of processing to qualify as food.

Protection of Supplies.—The Plant Products Division, in co-operation with the provinces and other agencies, is concerned primarily with the administration of Acts respecting feeding stuffs, fertilizers, pesticides, hay and straw, fibre flax and binder twine, and the production of seed. The inspection services of the Division have three main functions: (1) to enforce the Acts that regulate the sale of the agricultural supplies; (2) to provide as required such services as seed crop inspection and the sealing of seed produced from inspected and other approved crops; (3) to co-operate with provincial governments and other agencies in promoting and improving supplies of seeds, feeds, fertilizers and pesticides.

Visual inspection is of little value for most of these products and laboratory testing is necessary; the laboratory services of the Division maintain branch offices across Canada. Testing seeds is a complex matter, for they must be tested for germination, variety, purity and freedom from weeds and other kinds of seeds before they are graded. All feeding stuffs, fertilizers and pesticides are subject to registration and this is refused if the use of products would be dangerous, if the ingredients or analyses are unsatisfactory or if the claims made regarding their value are incorrect or misleading.

Plant Protection.—The Division of Plant Protection functions with regard to plants and plant products much as the Health of Animals Division does with animals, and it administers the Destructive Insect and Pest Act. Imported nursery stock and plant material are all subject to inspection as protection against the introduction of insects and diseases. Extensive inspection is maintained within Canada to identify, localize and exterminate dangerous enemies of crops and trees. Provision is also made for the inspection of potato crops to be used for seed, for domestic and export markets and for the issuance of health certificates required for a wide range of plant products.