

WEEKLY BULLETIN

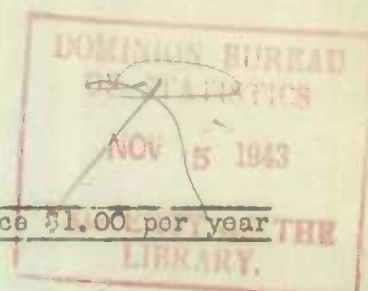
Dominion Bureau of Statistics

Department of Trade and Commerce

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Dominion-Provincial Conference on Vital Statistics

The three-day Dominion-Provincial Conference on Vital Statistics was opened on October 7 by Oliver Master, Acting Deputy Minister of the Department of Trade and Commerce, on behalf of the Hon. James A. MacKinnon, Minister of the Department who was unable to be present. The Conference was called for the purpose of confirming the work that has been done to date in vital statistics and making suggestions for improvement.

In the opening address Mr. Master said: On behalf of the Minister of the Department which is responsible for the statistics of the Dominion, I am pleased indeed to have the privilege of welcoming to this Dominion capital the representatives of the Provincial Departments of Health and other Government Departments and National Organizations interested in the improvement and utilization of vital statistics.

I am especially gratified to see with us an eminent statistician from the United States in the person of Dr. Halbert L. Dunn, Chief Statistician for Vital Statistics in the Bureau of Census, who will give us the benefit of his experience in statistical and registration problems as they relate to the United States, and who in his other important capacity as Secretary-General of the Inter-American Statistical Institute, can give us the broad statistical viewpoint of the other American countries.

We shall be glad also to welcome another prominent United States visitor, W. C. Wolling, Director of Vital Statistics for the State of Connecticut, and President of the American Association of Registration Executives.

It is unnecessary in this gathering to emphasize the importance of our national system of Vital Statistics. Not only are vital records essential as an aid in preventing crime, in facilitating the transfer of property and in promoting the security and moral tone of social life in general, but statistically they lie at the very basis of sanitation and public health policies, and afford a measure of national efficiency from a most important point of view, namely, the biological numbers, reproductive force, and vitality of the people.

Vital statistics is a subject which, though of paramount interest from a local-provincial standpoint, requires, the broadest possible treatment in order to reap the full benefits of its study. It becomes the duty, therefore, not only of the local authorities to take appropriate action, but of the Dominion as a whole to check, collate and compare results, so that not only may town be compared with town, but province with province, and Canada as a whole with other countries.

Two Dominion-Provincial Conferences on Vital Statistics have been held, one in June 1918, and the other in December of the same year, when the plans advanced by the Bureau for the establishment of a national Vital Statistics system were generally accepted, and as the result the Bureau publishes Vital Statistics data which are generally conceded to equal, if not surpass, in scope and precision those of any other country.

In the twenty-five years that have elapsed since the last conference, many new problems have arisen. The present world conflict has created many urgent problems of social health and welfare, complex in character, while the scheme now being formulated for Health Insurance has made very comprehensive demands upon our Vital Statistics organization and clearly demonstrates that the time has come for the serious consideration of all matters pertaining to our Vital Statistics structure.

Gentlemen, I know that you are anxious to begin your work on the many and complicated subjects that will come up for your consideration at these meetings. I will, therefore, conclude by simply expressing my best wishes for the success of this conference, which is of major significance for the future improvement of Public Health in Canada.

Speaking for himself, Mr. Master said that he felt that the conference would accomplish a great deal.

S. A. Cudmore, Dominion Statistician, was elected Chairman of the conference, while Donald MacKie, Deputy Registrar General, Department of Public Health of Alberta was elected Vice-Chairman.

In his opening remarks Mr. Cudmore said: I should like to join with my Deputy Minister in welcoming to this conference our two distinguished visitors from the United States, from who you are to hear a little later on, namely, Dr. Halbert L. Dunn and Mr. W. C. Welling. I am sure that you will recognize their presence with us as indicative of the steadily growing spirit of good neighbourliness between our country and the great Republic to the South. The problems of the two countries in many fields are very similar, and not least in the field with which we have to deal, so that I am sure that we shall benefit from their visit to Ottawa. I would also welcome most heartily the official delegates of the nine provinces, the representatives of the interested Dominion Departments, and the representatives of the national health and welfare organizations.

Reminiscing for a moment, I may remark that I was present as an observer at the first Vital Statistics Conference to be held in this country in June, 1918, when the vital statistics of Canada were in a far different and much inferior position to what they are to-day, and when hundreds of thousands of Canadians could not supply legal proof that they had ever been born; indeed, even to-day many of our older people cannot from their own records establish their claims to Old Age Pensions, with the result that the Government has had to impose upon the Bureau of Statistics the task of searching the records of the older censuses so that such persons may establish proof of age in cases where the Family Bible is not available. At the present time no fewer than fourteen clerks are constantly employed in the Bureau in trying to make up from those deficiencies of the past. Even so, many of our older people, and indeed many of our younger people, will suffer for many years to come from the lack of adequate official records of their births. I recall that even as recently as 1911 an investigation showed that some 26 per cent of the infants who had been baptized in certain Toronto parishes had never been registered as births.

Since the inauguration of the present system of Dominion-wide vital statistics conditions have greatly improved and a recent comparison of birth registrations with the Census records of the Census of 1941 indicates that the present time we are registering probably 97 to 98 per cent of the births. For this improvement in registration Canada is greatly indebted to the day by day work of the Provincial Registrars, but registration is after all only the start of the work.

Vital statistics, of course, require not only registration but the compilation and interpretation of the records. For these the country at large is deeply indebted to E. S. Macphail, now retired, who in the earlier years dealt with vital statistics as a subdivision of the Demography Branch of the Bureau of Statistics, and to the late and much regretted W. R. Tracey, who was the first Chief of the Vital Statistics Branch as a separate entity. We are fortunate, however, in his successor, my friend and colleague, Mr. J. T. Marshall, who has made notable contributions during the short period of his incumbency, especially in the organization of this conference, with its wealth of scientific papers. In this connection I should also pay tribute to the work of the Provincial Registrars who have co-operated most generously and loyally with the Bureau of Statistics. Our Vital Statistics Branch is in constant correspondence with their offices on an infinity of subjects and we are profoundly grateful to them for the attention and care which they give to the answering of our multitudinous requests for information.

I would refer also to the co-operation and advice which we receive instinctively from the officers of the Dominion Department of Pensions and National Health. On difficult problems we have the benefit of their consultation and advice, and our vital statistics have profited thereby. I am glad to feel that in certain important fields connected with their work we are rendering them service in return.

Again, our own Bureau, and in this connection I may perhaps be permitted to speak also for the provincial vital statistics officers, is greatly indebted to the Canadian Public Health Association for advice and assistance in furthering our efforts in connection with all matters relating to Canadian vital statistics.

Since the creation of the Vital Statistics Section of that organization in 1931 we have had the benefit of its technical medical advice in many matters, particularly in dealing with such problems as classification of causes of death, treatment of stillbirths and infant deaths, allocation of births and deaths by place of residence, and the use of a confidential death certificate. The recommendations made on behalf of Canada by the late W. R. Tracey at the 1938 Revision of the International List of Causes of Death followed almost entirely the lines suggested to us by the Association. In the future we hope to avail ourselves to an even larger extent of the advice and counsel of the Canadian Public Health Association on matters of medical and public health significance.

I would also gratefully acknowledge the debt which we owe to the Canadian Tuberculosis Association, and especially to its indefatigable Secretary, Dr. G. J. Wherrett, who has devoted so much of his valuable time to the analysis and elucidation of our records, even going so far as to assist us in the allocation of doubtful individual cases. If our statistics of tuberculosis and of the operations of tuberculosis sanatoria are as good as they are, we owe it very largely to the co-operation of the Canadian Tuberculosis Association and of Dr. Wherrett.

I feel also that I should here express the obligation of all of us who are concerned with vital statistics to the members of the medical profession generally, for without their co-operation in reporting births and deaths and certifying the causes of death on the medical certificate, all our efforts to supply vital statistics data for clinical research, medical education and general information would be of little avail. Therefore through Dr. Sellers, the representative of the Canadian Medical Association here present I would express to the medical men of Canada our appreciation of the indispensable contribution in building up the vital statistics of the nation.

Statistics, someone has said, are of use not only in recording the facts of the present, but also in determining what shall be in the future - the goal to which we shall work and the ideals at which we shall aim. New vistas of a healthier and happier Canada rise before our eyes in connection with the present movement toward social security, and, as an elderly man, I envy my young friend, Mr. Marshall, his privilege of spending what I hope may be the next quarter of a century in contributing, so far as statistics can do so, to the attainment of the ideals of healthier and happier living which he has set before himself and his collaborators in the various provinces.

The work of the Vital Statistics Branch, begun a quarter of a century ago, is visibly widening and deepening from year to year, and I am confident that adequate support will be given by all concerned to Mr. Marshall in the discharge of the many obligations that are being and will increasingly be laid upon him. During the last war we heard a great deal about making Canada a land fit for heroes to live in. I trust that after the present war we shall make it a land fit not only for heroes to live in but for those of us who are not heroes to live in and to live longer in, with better health and increased efficiency and well-being. May this conference conduce toward that end, concluded Mr. Cudmore.

The following were the official provincial delegates: Dr. B. C. Keeping, Prince Edward Island; Dr. H. Robertson, Nova Scotia; Dr. C. W. MacMillan, New Brunswick; Dr. Paul Parrot, Quebec; F. V. Johns, Ontario; Miss L. E. Steward, Manitoba; Dr. F. C. Middleton, Saskatchewan; Donald MacKie, Alberta; J. D. B. Scott, British Columbia; R. A. Gibson, Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Representatives from the Dominion Bureau of Statistics were S. A. Cudmore, Dominion Statistician; Herbert Marshall, Assistant Dominion Statistician; and John T. Marshall, Chief of the Vital Statistics Branch.

Representatives of other Departments of the Government Service included: G. D. Finlayson and A. D. Watson, Department of Insurance; Dr. P. E. Moore and C. E. S. Smith, Department of Mines and Resources; Dr. F. S. Burke, Department of Pensions and National Health; Arthur H. Hinds, Senate of Canada.

Representatives of other organizations: American Association of Registration Executives, W. C. Welling, Hartford, Conn.; Canadian Medical Association, Squadron Leader A. H. Sellers; Canadian Public Health Association, Dr. Mary A. Ross; Canadian Tuberculosis Association, Dr. G. J. Wherrett; City of Montreal, Dr. A. B. Valois; Department of Pensions and National Health, Dr. E. Couture; Health League of Canada, Dr. Gordon Bates; Life Insurance Officers' Association, Bruce Power; United States Bureau of Census, Dr. Halbert L. Dunn.

Dr. Enid Charles, A. H. Leneveu and H. G. Page of the staff of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics were also in attendance, as well as Miss E. Clarke, Miss M. A. Charbonneau, Miss I. Moffatt, Miss R. Blackburn and Miss W. O'Brien, of the Vital Statistics Branch.

Economic Conditions in First Eight Months of 1943

Fundamental factors indicating the trend of economic conditions averaged higher in the first eight months of 1943 than in the same period of the preceding year. Productive operations recorded an extension of the advance in evidence since the outbreak of hostilities while some evidence of tapering off was disclosed in recent months. New high levels in Canada's industrial history were recorded during the elapsed portion of the year.

The index of the physical volume of business based on five main components indicating the movement of production and distribution of commodities averaged 233 as compared with 198 in the same period of last year, a gain of 17.6 per cent. The advance in the index of manufacturing production was of even greater dimensions. The standing in the first eight months of the year was 288.5 against 233.6, a gain of 23.5 per cent having been indicated.

The advance in mineral production was about 24 per cent. The index during the first eight months of this year averaged nearly 280 against 225.7 in the same period of last year. The construction industry was less successful in obtaining new business, the total of contracts awarded having been \$142,000,000 against nearly \$199,000,000 in the same period of last year.

Internal trade showed a further advance over the high levels of 1942. The index of wholesale and retail sales recorded gains of 7.3 per cent and five per cent, respectively. The average of the wholesale index was 162.3 while retail sales index averaged 149.8.

External trade reflected the heavy production and flow of munitions and war supplies to the widespread battlefields. The export trade rose from \$1,485 million to \$1,890 million, a gain of more than 27 per cent. As imports showed only a moderate increase, the active balance of trade rose sharply from \$371,000,000 to \$750,000,000.

Due to the scarcity of additional man-power the number of persons employed in productive enterprise showed a relatively moderate gain in the first eight months of this year. The general index of employment rose from 169 to 182, a gain of 7.5 per cent.

September Cost of Living Index

The Dominion Bureau of Statistics cost of living index advanced from 119.2 on August 2 to 119.4 on September 1, for a wartime increase of 18.5 per cent. Small increases for foods, homefurnishings, and in the miscellaneous group accounted for this further rise. The food index advanced from 133.2 for August to 133.5 for September as advances for eggs, beef and pork outweighed declines for potatoes and lemons. The homefurnishings index moved up from 117.9 to 118.2 on scattered increases for furniture and hardware. An advance in the transportation section caused the miscellaneous group index to rise from 108.2 to 108.3. Other groups remained unchanged.

Index Numbers of Wholesale Prices

The weekly index number of 30 industrial material prices continued upward in September. For the week of the 24th the composite index showed an advance of one point to 99.3 over the final August level. The stable group of 12 commodities advanced two points to 119.1 on substantial increases for B.C. fir and eastern spruce, while continued strength in wheat more than counterbalanced weakness in steers and hogs to move foods 0.8 points higher to 99.1. The manufacturing materials sub-group stiffened 0.3 points to 83.9 on an increase in cottonseed oil outweighing a small decline in rosin.

Rapidly rising wheat prices were mainly accountable for an increase of 2.3 points to 97.8 in the composite Canadian farm products index between August 27 and September 24. Field products moved 4.4 points higher to 85.9 on an average increase of 10 cents per bushel for wheat coupled with a 25 cents per bushel increase in the ceiling price of flax and a small rise in rye. This offset a further seasonal reduction in potato prices.

August Employment Situation

Industrial employment showed a further upward movement at August 1, when the general increase exceeded the average at that date in the experience of the years since 1920. It approximated the gain at the beginning of August last year, but was smaller than in 1940 or 1941. Returns were received by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from 13,834 establishments which employed 1,867,898 men and women, an increase of 22,033 persons or 1.2 per cent over July 1.

The amounts expended by the cooperating employers in salaries and wages at August 1 were given at \$57,870,495, an average of \$30.98 per employee. At July 1, these firms had reported the disbursement of \$57,168,949, a per capita average of \$30.97. The average for August 1 last year was \$28.62. Although loss of working time during vacations affected the latest payrolls to some extent, they are nevertheless the highest since statistics of this nature were first compiled by the Bureau 27 months ago.

Based on the 1926 average as 100, the index of employment, at 185.9, exceeded by 4.6 per cent, that of 177.8 at August 1, 1942, previously the maximum for midsummer. The latest figure was, however, fractionally lower than the all-time peak of 186.5, reached at December 1, 1942. Since the increase in the index at the first of August was above normal, the seasonally-adjusted index showed a further advance, rising from 180.2 at July 1, to 180.9 at August 1.

As has usually been the case at midsummer, the majority of the persons added to the working force were taken on in the non-manufacturing industries, which absorbed some 72 per cent of the 22,033 persons additionally employed. The cooperating manufacturers reported an increase of some 6,200, a gain which exceeded the average at the beginning of August in the period since 1920, but which was nevertheless considerably smaller than that at August 1 in any other year since 1938; prior to that, the trend in manufacturing had usually been downward. Within this group, there was further expansion in iron and steel, lumber, electrical apparatus and other branches of the durable goods industries. In plants turning out non-durable goods, further considerable curtailment was indicated in chemical works; the production of textiles, tobacco and some other commodities also showed a falling-off, which in some cases was seasonal in character. On the other hand, animal and vegetable food, pulp and paper, beverage and petroleum factories reported greater activity.

Within the non-manufacturing industries, logging recorded seasonal curtailment of about average proportions, while the trend was upward in trade, communications, services, mining, transportation and construction and maintenance. The largest increase, of over 13,300 employees, took place in construction, but this gain of 7.9 per cent was considerably smaller than usual at the beginning of August. Except for the advance of more than 3,200 persons in transportation, and 1,200 in mining, the improvement in the remaining industries was rather slight. The expansion in coal-mining, which absorbed most of those taken in the extractive industries, was the largest indicated since September 1, 1941.

Visible Supply of Wheat

Stocks of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America at midnight on September 30 totalled 374,058,254 bushels, including 361,779,761 bushels in Canadian positions and 12,278,493 in United States positions. On the corresponding date last year stocks amounted to 406,307,426 bushels.

Farmers' Marketings of Wheat and Coarse Grains

Farmers in western Canada marketed 4,318,977 bushels of wheat during the week ending September 30 as compared with 6,155,213 in the previous week. Included in the totals were 235,510 and 348,348 bushels of Durum, respectively. Marketings during the period from August 1 to September 30 totalled 36,785,150 bushels compared with 26,811,627 in the like period of the previous crop year.

During the week ending September 30 the following quantities of coarse grains were delivered from farms in the three Prairie Provinces, totals for the previous week being in brackets: oats, 3,117,894(2,808,715) bushels; barley 3,119,824(3,173,659); rye 29,030(43,356); flaxseed 2,183,708(1,466,264) bushels.

Estimates of Fruit Crops

The estimates of the various fruit crops, with few exceptions, remain unchanged since August. Slight upward revisions in the estimates of the apple crops in Ontario and British Columbia increased the prospects approximately one per cent to bring the estimate to 4,044,600 barrels. If the present indications hold until after the harvest, the crop will be seven per cent smaller than that of 1942 when 4,330,900 barrels were picked.

Pears also showed a slight improvement during the month due chiefly to the somewhat brighter outlook in Nova-Scotia where the crop is packing-out approximately 15 per cent better than was expected. The crop this year is now set at 508,800 bushels which is a decline of 32 per cent from the 752,900 bushels produced in 1942.

No change whatever was made in the estimates of the plum, peach and grape crops from a month ago. The plum and prune crop is estimated at 331,500 bushels, a decline of nine per cent from the 1942 harvest. Peaches are also a much smaller crop this year at 571,100 bushels compared with 1,939,200 bushels. The outlook for grapes indicates a decline of 22 per cent but the current estimate of 58,201,600 pounds is 31 per cent above the five year 1936-40 average of 44,319,000 pounds.

Manufacturing in the Prairie Provinces

Under the impetus of war demands, manufacturing production of the Prairie Provinces advanced to a new high level in 1941, the gross value of products amounting to \$450,207,219 as compared with \$351,517,461 in 1940, an increase of 28.1 per cent. From the standpoint of gross value of products, Manitoba was the most important manufacturing province of the prairie area, with an output valued at \$211,534,751, followed by Alberta at \$142,651,493 and Saskatchewan \$96,020,975. Each of the three provinces recorded increases over 1940.

Stocks of Butter, Cheese and Eggs

Stocks of creamery butter in nine of the principal cities of Canada on October 1 were 50,930,712 pounds, an increase of only one million pounds over last month. October 1 is the peak point of the year in stocks of this product. Cheese holdings were 39,987,853 pounds as compared with 51,717,978 last year. Quantities of cold storage eggs were small, but stocks of fresh eggs totalled 1,456,251 dozen, while frozen eggs amounted to 13,594,699 pounds.

Production of Coal in August

Canadian mines produced 1,426,032 tons of coal during August compared with 1,468,448 in the corresponding month last year. Production for the first eight months of this year totalled 11,685,386 tons, a reduction of six per cent from the output during the same period in 1942. Imports during the month totalled 3,801,718 as compared with 2,909,743 a year ago, while the exports amounted to 122,779 tons compared with 102,106.

Production of Coke in August

Production of coke in Canada in August amounted to 314,000 tons compared with 308,000 in the previous month and 274,000 in August last year. During the eight months ended August output totalled 2,192,000 tons compared with 2,184,000 in the corresponding period of last year.

Indexes of Retail Sales in August

The dollar volume of retail purchases averaged three per cent lower in August than in the corresponding month last year, but was down four per cent from the July level, according to monthly index numbers computed by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The general index of sales, unadjusted for number of business days or for normal seasonal movements and on the base 1935-1939=100 stood at 142.5 for August, 147.8 for July and 147.5 for August, 1942. Sales during the eight months ended August averaged 3.9 per cent higher than in the corresponding period of 1942.

Steam Railway Operations in 1942

One effect of the war on the railways has been to raise the revenues to the highest point in their history. Total operating revenue in 1942 amounted to \$663,610,570, which was \$296,431,475 or 81 per cent greater than the 1939 total. Operating expenses increased from \$304,373,285 in 1939 to \$485,783,584.

Freight revenue increased by \$216,960,590 or 76 per cent, and passenger traffic showed even greater rates of increase. Passenger revenues were larger than in 1939 by 153 per cent, sleeping car revenues by 122 per cent, parlour and chair revenues by 108 per cent, express by 40.6 per cent, and even milk revenue increased by 23 per cent. Revenue from dining and buffet service increased from \$1,819,988 to \$5,825,211, or by 220 per cent, and hotel and restaurant revenues increased by 112 per cent. Mail revenues increased by 8.6 per cent.

Freight traffic was heavier than in 1939 by 50,043,415 tons or 59 per cent. Passenger traffic increased over 1939 by 27,114,304 passengers or 133 per cent. Excluding 11,468,219 commuters working in war plants outside of Montreal in 1942, the increase over 1939 traffic was 78 per cent.

The number of employees increased from 129,362 in 1939 to 157,740, or by 22 per cent, and the pay roll increased from \$200,373,668 to \$291,416,755, or by 45 per cent. Each class of employee showed increases in average annual wages. The increases in wages were due to cost of living bonus and longer hours including overtime.

Reports Issued During the Week

1. Car Loadings on Canadian Railways - Weekly (10 cents).
2. Statistics of Steam Railways, 1942 (10 cents).
3. Canadian Milling Statistics, August (10 cents).
4. Economic Conditions during First Eight Months of 1943 (10 cents).
5. Canadian Grain Statistics (10 cents).
6. The Talc and Soapstone Industry, 1942 (15 cents).
7. Monthly Indexes of Retail Sales, August (10 cents).
8. Employment Situation, August (10 cents).
9. Coal and Coke Statistics, August (10 cents).
10. Fruit Crop Report (10 cents).
11. Manufacturing Industries of the Prairie Provinces, 1941 (25 cents).
12. Advance Preliminary Statement of Stocks of Butter, Cheese and Eggs in Principal Cities of Canada, October 1 (10 cents).



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