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World Wheat Situation

Argentine and Australian farmers are busy adding their quota to the world wheat supply of bread grain for 1944. The new harvest is well advanced in Australia and is extending southward in Argentina to the heavy producing areas in the province of Buenos Aires. Production in Australia is estimated at 97,000,000 bushels compared with 156,000,000 bushels a year ago, while the Argentine crop, recently revised downward to 291,000,000 bushels, compares with 235,000,000 bushels produced last year. Thus, the combined wheat crop of these two southern hemisphere countries is 388,000,000 bushels or approximately the same as they produced a year ago.

Making allowance for normal domestic disappearance in both countries during the next twelve months, the surplus available for export from the new crop is about 225,000,000 bushels. Australia has a carry-over of 153,000,000 bushels of old wheat and Argentina 122,000,000 bushels after deducting quantities set aside for fuel and animal feed. This makes a total surplus of 500,000,000 bushels available for export and carry-over in Argentina and Australia during 1944.

When joined to the Canadian wheat surplus, which stood at 670,000,000 bushels on October 1, 1943, this reservoir of wheat would seem to hold assurance that a Europe liberated in 1944 and provided with adequate ocean tonnage would not go short of bread. Moreover, both Canada and the United States will harvest another wheat crop in the middle of 1944 and the United States is endeavouring to increase the acreage under wheat for the 1944 harvest by 14,000,000 acres.

Tremendous quantities of wheat have been disappearing into non-food channels during the past year under stress of the burden of supplies in some countries and because of the lack of adequate feed supplies for live stock in others. There are indications that this diversion of bread grain supplies will taper off in 1944, particularly if the end of the European struggle comes in sight. In this event, at least 1,000,000,000 bushels of wheat, half of it in Canada, would be available for shipment to the hungry people of Europe.

It was with this statistical picture in the background that the Dominion-Provincial Agricultural Conference held in Ottawa early in December, decided to recommend that no increase in wheat acreage in Canada be encouraged in 1944. The production of coarse grain and oil-bearing seed crops, as well as peas, beans and corn was regarded as more urgent and it was suggested that a high proportion of the land in western Canada be summerfallowed again in 1944. This summerfallow, it was contended, would be an asset if circumstances justified an increase in wheat acreage in 1945.

Both the United States and Argentina removed wheat acreage restrictions in 1943 but Canada and Australia held to a policy of acreage reduction. The two Dominions were successful in their efforts, but the other two countries accomplished very little in the way of increased plantings, partly because the restrictions were removed too late to permit of farmers altering their seeding plans.

The peak of wheat acreage in Canada was reached in 1940 when it was 23,726,000 acres. Three years later the acreage was at its lowest level in a quarter of a century when in 1943 only 17,488,000 acres were planted to wheat. This figure is the objective officially set for 1944. The fall wheat crop is already planted and an increase of 20,000 acres or four per cent is noted in Ontario where the bulk of the fall wheat is produced.

Wheat acreage in the United States has been held down by law during recent years but all restrictions were removed last spring and the objective for 1944 is 68,000,000 acres, an increase of 14,000,000 acres over the seeded area for the 1943 harvest. Winter wheat seeding is over and unofficial estimates indicate that the increase in acreage is only 5,000,000 acres or about 13 per cent. This leaves spring wheat farmers with a high objective if the over-all increase of 14,000,000 acres is to be secured.

Acreage policy in Australia the past two years has compelled reduction in wheat plantings in Western Australia and encouraged reduction in the other States. These efforts have been successful and as was the case in both Canada and the United States, farmers in Australia were compensated for reducing wheat acreage.

Authentic information on wheat acreage in Europe has been unobtainable. Unofficial estimates have indicated that wheat acreage in the United Kingdom has been doubled since the war began. The acreage in Eire is known to be higher but only piecemeal information of an unofficial character has been available for continental Europe. It is generally assumed that labour difficulties, the lack of fertilizer supplies and the scars of battle have reduced the crop area, and that wartime production has been consistently below the pre-war average. It is reported, however, that bread grain production in 1943 was the highest of the war years.

Visible Supply of Wheat

Stocks of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America at midnight on December 16 totalled 331,547,468 bushels, including 323,418,082 bushels in Canadian positions and 38,129,406 bushels in United States positions. On the corresponding date last year stocks amounted to 463,153,666 bushels.

Marketings of Wheat and Coarse Grains

Farmers in western Canada marketed 6,705,238 bushels of wheat during the week ending December 16 as compared with 6,376,427 in the previous week. During the elapsed portion of the crop year which commenced August 1, marketings totalled 100,442,393 bushels as compared with 134,179,990 in the corresponding period of the previous crop year.

The following quantities of coarse grains also were delivered from western farms during the week ending December 16, totals for the previous week being in brackets: oats, 6,405,555 (1,717,919) bushels; barley, 4,528,312 (1,880,968); rye, 232,000 (102,832); flaxseed, 162,992 (209,690).

Estimate of Argentine Grain Crops

The Argentine Ministry of Agriculture has issued its preliminary estimate of the probable production of five of the principal grain crops in 1943-44. Each of the five crops is expected to show substantial increase over that of last season, varying from 10 per cent in the case of linseed to 327 per cent in rye.

Estimates as received by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics follow, with production totals for last year in brackets: wheat, 291,000,000 (235,156,000) bushels; linseed, 70,863,000 (61,414,000); oats, 136,168,000 (45,339,000); barley, 40,418,000 (16,075,000); rye, 55,115,000 (5,626,000).

Area of Occupied Farm Lands in 1941

Preliminary census figures place the total area of occupied farm land in Canada in 1941 at 174,767,599 acres as compared with 163,119,231 acres in 1931, an increase of 11,648,368 acres or 7.1 per cent. The area of improved land in 1941 totalled 94,441,246 acres compared with 85,733,309 acres in 1931, an increase of 8,707,947 acres or 7.8 per cent. Unimproved farm land totalled 82,326,353 acres compared with 77,385,922 in 1931, an increase of 6.4 per cent.

Improved farm land under crop amounted to 56,792,626 acres compared with 58,334,625 in 1931, representing a decrease of 2.6 per cent. The pasturage area totalled 3,666,910 acres compared with 8,011,949, while the area of summer fallow increased slightly more than 39 per cent to 23,649,852 acres from 17,007,346. Other improved land totalled 3,331,856 acres compared with 2,379,389.

Unimproved occupied farm land totalled 82,326,353 acres in 1941, the area of woodland amounting to 22,467,675 acres compared with 26,647,535 in 1931, Prairie or natural pasturage 52,744,171 acres compared with 42,576,184 and marsh or waste land 7,094,507 acres compared with 8,162,203 acres.

The total area of occupied farm land in 1941 was as follows by provinces, totals for 1931 being in brackets: Prince Edward Island, 1,168,858 (1,191,202) acres; Nova Scotia, 3,816,646 (4,302,031); New Brunswick, 3,964,109 (4,151,596); Quebec, 19,287,775 (17,304,164); Ontario, 22,364,316 (22,840,898); Manitoba, 16,891,322 (15,131,685); Saskatchewan, 59,960,927 (55,673,460); Alberta, 43,277,295 (38,977,457); British Columbia, 4,033,570 (3,541,541); Yukon, 2,781 (5,197).

Sex Distribution of Persons Employed

Two hundred and sixty-two out of every 1,000 persons employed in the nine leading industrial divisions in Canada on October 1 were female workers as compared with 235 per 1,000 on the corresponding date last year, according to a survey conducted by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The number of females in recorded employment on October 1 this year was approximately 511,000 out of a total personnel of 1,950,000 compared with 441,000 female workers in the reported staff of 1,880,000 on the corresponding date last year.

It is worth of note that despite the virtual stabilization of the number of male wage-earners reported in the year, and the widely-distributed gains in the number of females, there have been increases in the average weekly earnings in the various industries and areas between October 1 of 1942 and 1943. Since no general increase in the cost of living allowance was authorized during this period, the widespread rises in the average weekly earnings result in specific cases from increases in the rates of wages or bonus, but more generally, from the upgrading of workers as they acquire experience.

Of the total of 510,715 women in recorded employment in the nine leading industrial divisions, 337,251 or 66 per cent were engaged in manufacturing, including electric light and power; the October 1, 1942, proportion had been 66.4 per cent. The next largest groups of female employees were those of 80,238 in trade, 32,958 in finance and 25,319 in services. Communications, transportation, construction, mining and logging together reported approximately 34,450 women workers, or only 6.7 per cent of the total. Small though this proportion was, it fractionally exceeded that of just over six per cent at the time of the October 1, 1942 survey.

The number of females engaged in plants turning out heavy manufactured goods constituted 25.6 per cent of the total at October 1 this year as compared with 20.9 per cent in 1942. On the other hand, the proportion of the total reported by the light goods manufacturers declined from 45 per cent to little more than 40 per cent; employment in this class was then generally quieter than a year earlier, the falling-off taking place among the male workers. Certain manufacturers of consumers' goods reported growing difficulty in obtaining the services of women and girls; in a few cases, it was stated that shortages of such workers were being made up by the employment of increasingly large numbers of boys of pre-enlistment ages.

Among the provinces, Ontario and Quebec ranked first and second, respectively, in the number of females in recorded employment; 46.7 per cent of the Dominion total belonged in Ontario, while Quebec firms reported 31.6 per cent of the aggregate. The greatest gains over the year in the number of women in each 1,000 persons on the reported payrolls were in Manitoba and British Columbia, where the proportions rose by some 27 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively. The largest increases in the number of females at work were shown in British Columbia with a rise of 34.5 per cent, and in Alberta where the number exceeded by 30.2 per cent that indicated in 1942.

Unemployment Insurance Claims in October

Local offices of the Unemployment Insurance Commission received 1,475 applications for benefit payments during October as compared with 1,013 in the previous month and 1,058 in October last year. A total of 1,544 claims were considered during October this year, 1,318 of which had been forwarded during the month and 226 carried over from September. Of the claims dealt with, 897 were found entitled to benefit, 254 not entitled to benefit and 393 were pending at the end of the month.

Out of an estimated insured population of 2,680,300 currently holding books, 146,003 employment applications were recorded in the four weeks ending October 23 and 45,551 of these applications were listed as unplaced on that date. Since, under present National Selective Service regulations, many of these applicants remain in their jobs pending transfer to another position, it cannot be assumed that all of the applicants were unemployed.

During October, 1,025 persons were paid benefit and of these 550 commenced the receipt of benefit cheques. Persons receiving benefit were paid \$24,308 for a total of 13,782 days. In October last year, 1,222 persons received \$25,827 for a total of 14,270 days.

The average duration of the unemployment compensated in October was 13.4 days as against 11.7 in October, 1942. During October of this year the average paid per beneficiary was \$23.72 and the average per compensated day of unemployment was \$1.76 compared with \$21.16 per beneficiary and \$1.81 per compensated day in October, 1942.

Cheques Cashed Against Individual Accounts

The amount of cheques cashed in clearing centres rose to a high point in November, the total having been \$5,913,000,000 against \$4,867,000,000 in the same month of last year. The increase, reflecting heavy payments on the Fifth Victory Loan and acceleration of economic activities, amounted to no less than 19 per cent. Debits during the eleven months of this year amounted to \$46,946,000,000 compared with \$41,332,000,000 in the similar period of last year, an increase of 13.4 per cent.

Wholesale Prices in November

Higher prices in the vegetable, animal and wood products group were responsible for a further increase of 0.5 points to 102.4 in the composite wholesale index between October and November. The index for Canadian farm product prices moved to a new wartime peak of 104.2 in November for a gain of 0.6 over October, moving above the general wholesale series for the first time since 1937. Field products were 0.5 points higher at 91.3 due to firmer quotations for certain grains, potatoes, onions and hay, while the increase of 0.7 to 125.7 recorded for animal products reflected further strength in livestock and eggs. No change occurred in the monthly composite index for 30 industrial materials, the index holding at 99.2.

Gold Production in October

The Canadian production of gold in October totalled 230,062 fine ounces compared with 282,204 in the previous month and 385,111 in the corresponding month last year. Total output during the ten months ended October was 3,121,584 fine ounces compared 4,112,566 in the similar period of last year. Employees in auriferous quartz mines, including both salaried employees and wage-earners numbered 16,053 in October compared with 16,511 in September and 21,622 in October a year ago.

Brewing of Beer, Ale and Porter

The production of beer, ale and porter by the Canadian brewing industry in 1942 amounted to 109,017,630 gallons valued at \$120,211,668 compared with 90,247,237 gallons valued at \$96,420,962 in 1941. The 1939 production totalled 62,780,052 gallons valued at \$59,139,600.

Car Loadings on Canadian Railways

Car loadings for the week ended December 11 amounted to 71,434 cars as compared with 73,762 in the previous week and 66,724 in the corresponding week last year. Loadings in the eastern division increased from 42,623 cars in 1942 to 43,493 in the western division from 24,096 to 27,939 cars.

Reports Issued During the Week

1. Railway Revenue Freight Loadings, November (10 cents). 2. Clay & Clay Products Industry, 1942 (25 cents). 3. Area and Condition of Occupied Farm Land, 1941 (10 cents). 4. The Brewing Industry, 1942 (25 cents). 5. Coffins and Caskets, 1942 (10 cents). 6. Car Loadings on Canadian Railways (10 cents). 7. Monthly Review of the Wheat Situation (10 cents). 8. Sex Distribution of the Persons in Recorded Employment, October 1, 1943 (25 cents). 9. Cheques Cashed Against Individual Accounts, November (10 cents). 10. Statistical Report on the Operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act, October (10 cents). 11. Prices & Price Indexes, November (10 cents). 12. The Grain Situation in Argentina (10 cents). 13. Gold Production, October (10 cents). 14. Car Loadings on Canadian Railways (10 cents). 15. Canadian Grain Statistics (10 cents).



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