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Facts of Interest from Bureau Records

The use of asbestos can be traced back to ancient times. It was used for wicks in the lamps of the Vestal Virgins, and as a cremation cloth by the Romans. Later, in the reign of Peter the Great, a factory was established in Russia for the manufacture of asbestos articles. Chrysotile, the finest asbestos, was discovered in the Province of Quebec about 1862 and the mineral was first produced commercially in Canada in 1878 from the serpentine formations of the Thetford area in the Eastern Townships. The Canadian deposits are the largest known in the world. Asbestos enters into a great variety of products, including brake lining, clutch facings, packings, cloth, insulation, mill-board, siding, shingles, roofing, tile and pipes. In 1944 the production in Canada amounted to 373,000 tons, according to preliminary totals.

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The manufacture of baskets is one of the oldest of all handicrafts. The ancient Israelites used baskets in offering sacrifices, the early Britons were skilled in basketry and the Chinese have for ages produced baskets of great beauty. The Indians of the Americas reached a high degree of proficiency in the art. To-day basketry holds an important part in educational work. It is taught in practically all schools where manual training has been introduced and has proven an admirable industry for the aged and disabled, especially the blind. Canadian production of baskets and crates for fruit and vegetables were valued at \$1,850,000 in 1942.

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The making of carpets is an art which belongs to remote antiquity. The Egyptians and Babylonians used them not only as floor coverings but also as covering for walls and tables. Beautiful carpets were also made by the Assyrians, Persians, Chinese and Indians. The conquests of Alexander the Great resulted in carpets being introduced into Greece as spoils of war, and the Crusaders brought carpets home with them to Italy, France and Spain. Eleanor of Spain, when she married Edward the First, took carpets and rugs to England with her, but it was Queen Elizabeth who brought them into general use. Her adventurous traders, scouring the seas for cargoes, found them profitable. Most of the carpets and rugs used in Canada are manufactured in the Dominion and the output in 1942 had a factory value of about \$6,219,000, according to the General Manufactures Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

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The axe is the symbol of pioneering. The first settlers landing in America were met with the task of clearing the land, building log cabins, fashioning crude furniture and literally hewing homes for themselves out of the virgin forest. They used the axes with straight cutting edges and straight helves or handles that are still used in many parts of Europe. Following the pioneers, and largely recruited from their ranks, came the lumbermen and later the pulpwood operators, and the axe changed its form to meet each new requirement. The woodsman's axe is probably the most universally useful of all the tools man has adapted to his use down through the ages. It takes the place of a whole chest of carpenter's tools. With it an expert can do almost anything with wood, from felling a tree to sharpening a pencil. More axes were produced in Canada in 1943 than in any other year for which statistics are available, the total in that year having been 787,000 as compared with 403,000 in 1939, 562,000 in 1930 and 672,000 in 1920.

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Replacing the horse-car systems used in Montreal and Toronto as early as 1861, electric street railways were first seen in operation in Canada in 1885, when a successful experimental railway was constructed and operated at the Toronto Exhibition Grounds. The first electric railway line in Canada and probably the first in North America, which ran between Windsor and Walkerville, was established early in June 1886. The era of the horse-drawn street car was definitely ending. The growth in street car traffic within the half century has been rapid, reaching a peace-time peak in 1929 when the number of passengers exceeded 833,000,000. There was a heavy drop during the worst of the depression years. The war years, however, have witnessed a tremendous growth in the passenger traffic of electric street railway systems, and in 1943 the number carried was 1,177,000,000 - an all-time record. In several municipalities the electric street car has been displaced by motor buses, and practically all street railway companies operate motor buses and trackless trolley buses in conjunction with their electric street cars.

Stocks of Food on April 1

The stocks of creamery butter in storage and in transit on April 1 showed a better position than on the corresponding date of last year, being almost two million pounds greater. On April 1, 1945, the stocks amounted to 13,418,962 pounds as compared with 11,474,318 pounds a year ago. There was the usual seasonal reduction from the stocks of March 1, which were 20,678,181 pounds. Stocks of cheese in storage and in transit on April 1 were 21,293,287 pounds as compared with 20,724,820 last year and 24,275,373 pounds a month ago.

Holdings by manufacturers of evaporated whole milk on April 1 totalled 20,142,518 pounds. Last year the stocks were only 5,663,924 pounds, while on March 1 of this year stocks amounted to 18,269,781 pounds. Stocks of skim milk powder were 2,982,742 pounds, being a large increase over the holdings of April 1, 1944, which were 715,385 pounds, but only slightly altered from the March 1 total of 2,821,358 pounds.

Stocks of shell eggs on April 1 increased to 5,608,499 dozen from the March 1 holdings of 2,821,907 dozen. The current holdings, however, were almost a million dozen less than the 6,572,810 dozen held a year ago. Frozen eggs on hand were below the quantities held last year and last month. On April 1 this year the stocks totalled 11,503,127 pounds as compared with 13,317,776 on April 1 last year and 18,078,964 on March 1, 1945. There was a reduction in total stocks of dressed poultry on April 1 to 11,385,291 pounds from the April 1, 1944 total of 20,207,024 pounds, and the March 1 figure of 15,931,975 pounds.

Holdings of all meat on April 1, 1945 amounted to 94,587,488 pounds, as compared with last year's April 1 stocks of 149,208,603 pounds, at which time storage space was difficult to find. Of the current stocks, pork totalled 59,869,371 pounds, beef 29,011,516 pounds, veal 2,549,126 pounds, and mutton and lamb 3,157,475 pounds. Lard stocks, which were 20,027,442 pounds on April 1, 1944, were reduced to 3,286,367 pounds on April 1, 1945.

Stocks of frozen fish on April 1 totalled 17,293,958 pounds, according to preliminary figures. These compare with 20,686,501 pounds on March 1 and 20,296,086 on April 1, 1944. Cod stocks on April 1 this year amounted to 2,288,155 pounds, haddock 549,162, smoked fillets 523,991 pounds, salmon 2,041,623 pounds and sea herring 7,114,185 pounds.

Holdings of apples on April 1 were reduced to 885,554 bushels from last month's stocks of 2,042,270 bushels, but the seasonal stocks were higher than last year's total of 621,611 bushels. Potato holdings were 180,420 tons as compared with 137,655 tons a year ago and 197,877 tons last month. Stocks of onions were 8,432 tons, being 10 times the holdings of a year ago, when the stocks were 838 tons.

Frozen fruit and fruit in preservatives on April 1 totalled 23,286,877 pounds as compared with 28,585,172 pounds last year and 26,579,724 pounds a month ago. Of the current stocks, 239,612 pounds were in frozen packages of '10 pounds and under', 7,925,650 pounds 'over 10 pounds', and 15,121,615 pounds in preservatives, chiefly in sulphur dioxide, but also in benzoate of soda.

Vegetables, frozen and in brine, amounted to 4,431,959 pounds on April 1. Last year the stocks totalled 1,394,937 pounds and last month the total was 4,897,177 pounds.

Dairy Situation in Canada in March

March was a favourable month for dairying. The creamery butter output of 14,525,000 pounds was nearly three per cent above that of March last year. During the first three months of the current year 36,550,000 pounds were produced, or two per cent more than that made in the same period of the preceding year. Due to a reduction in the butter ration to six ounces, and more rigid control measures, the domestic disappearance in January declined two million pounds. In February it fell four million pounds, but, of course, part of this was due to the difference in the length of the month and must be discounted to this extent. Production prospects are brighter, the season is earlier, more milk is being produced and there promises to be a considerable quantity of surplus milk diverted into the creamery butter channel during the month of April. Indications now point to a sizeable reserve supply at May 1, the end of the normal storage season.

Cheddar cheese production continues to advance, the output in March amounting to 3,532,000 pounds, or 11.4 per cent above that of the same month a year ago. During the first quarter of 1945, eight million pounds were produced, nearly five per cent greater than that made in the first three months of 1944.

Concentrated milk production, whole and skim combined, advanced $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent during March ~~as compared with~~ a year ago, giving a total production of 20,311,000 pounds. Whole milk products of 17 million pounds moved up 10 per cent; and milk by-products amounted to 3,211,000 pounds, an increase of 33 per cent. Evaporated milk advanced 12 per cent, giving a total of 13,407,000 pounds; and skim milk powder increased to 2,296,000 pounds or 52 per cent greater than that manufactured in March 1944.

The ice cream output fell to 899,000 gallons in March, a six per cent decline from that of the same month last year. During the three-month period, 2,527,000 gallons were produced, representing a reduction of approximately two per cent.

The total production of milk in February was approximately 916,336,000 pounds. While this represented a decline from last year, on the basis of a 29-day month, there would actually be an increase of two per cent in comparison with a 28-day month. More milk was diverted into creamery butter in the Eastern Provinces, and in British Columbia concentrated milk absorbed a greater proportion of the total supply. Although complete March figures of milk production are not yet available, it is a significant fact that the quantity used for manufacture in factories was 15 million pounds or three and one half per cent greater than that used in March 1944.

The month of March was exceptionally warm. High temperatures and normal sunshine prevailed throughout the Dominion, and there was little or no snow to impede deliveries from farms. Cow numbers, reported in February, were about one per cent higher than those of a year ago, and an increase in those coming into lactation in March would tend to raise the percentage of cows being milked. On the whole the calving season is a little earlier than it was a year ago. Advance information would indicate that milk production will be well maintained during the coming season. A decline is imminent in the Prairie Provinces, but it is expected that this will be offset by the increase in Eastern Canada and West Coast regions.

Trends in Food Distribution in February

Food wholesalers reported a more active trading market in February of this year than last, as measured by dollar volume of business. Reports received by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics from 77 of the larger wholesale grocery establishments recorded an advance of five per cent for that trade, while statements from fruit and vegetable wholesalers indicated an increase of six per cent.

Sales transacted by 942 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged six per cent higher in February 1945 than sales of 956 units operated by the same 27 firms in February a year ago. Sales reported by 1,283 independent food stores were three per cent higher. The sample of stores comprising this monthly survey includes grocery stores, combination grocery and meat stores as well as meat markets.

Stocks and Marketings of Wheat and Coarse Grains

Stocks of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America at midnight on April 5 amounted to 340,190,299 bushels as compared with 331,487,507 bushels on the corresponding date of last year. Stocks on the latest date included 320,069,799 bushels in Canadian positions and 20,120,500 bushels in United States positions.

Deliveries of wheat from farms in the Prairie Provinces during the week ending April 5 amounted to 2,742,606 bushels as compared with 2,193,239 bushels in the preceding week. During the elapsed portion of the present crop year deliveries from farms totalled 274,630,840 bushels as compared with 203,590,320 in the similar period of 1943-44.

The following quantities of coarse grains were also delivered from farms in the Prairie Provinces during the week ending April 5, totals for the preceding week being in brackets: oats, 1,829,441 (1,562,329) bushels; barley, 263,208 (258,071); rye, 39,696 (43,065); flaxseed, 16,518 (12,762).

Indexes of Wholesale Sales in February

The dollar volume of wholesale trading transacted during February increased six per cent over the corresponding month of last year. The advance was smaller than that recorded in January when sales were 14 per cent above the value of trading in January, 1944.

The February unadjusted index of sales on the base, 1935-1939=100, stands at 178.8 compared with 182.3 in the preceding month and 168.8 in February 1944.

While all regions of the country shared in the six per cent gain, increases were not uniform, ranging from three per cent in British Columbia to 10 per cent in Ontario. Increases on a regional basis were as follows: Maritime Provinces, seven per cent; Quebec, four per cent; Ontario, 10 per cent; Prairie Provinces, four per cent; and British Columbia, three per cent.

The automotive equipment trade and the footwear trade each reported a substantial gain of 15 per cent. Tobacco and confectionery sales were up 12 per cent, while hardware wholesalers reported eight per cent more business transacted. Smaller gains of six, five and four per cent were recorded by the fruits and vegetables trade, the grocery trade and the drug trade respectively. Dry goods sales were slightly less than one per cent below the level of trading in February 1944, while clothing sales declined by one per cent.

Sales and Purchases of Securities Between Canada and Other Countries during January

Net sales of securities by Canada to other countries increased to \$9,700,000 in January as compared with \$2,900,000 in December and \$4,000,000 in November. Net sales of securities to the United States of \$11,700,000 were higher than in most months of 1944, but a larger part arose from sales of United States securities than usual. Sales of Canadian bonds to the United States accounted for \$6,500,000 of the total. Net repurchases from the United Kingdom of \$2,200,000 were distributed between Canadian bonds and stocks. There were net sales of \$200,000 to other countries.

Sales of securities to all countries in January were valued at \$26,000,000 as compared with \$18,100,000 in the preceding month and \$16,600,000 in the corresponding month of last year. Purchases from other countries in January totalled \$16,300,000 as compared with \$15,200,000 in December and \$10,500,000 in January 1944. Sales to the United States in January amounted to \$25,500,000, while the purchases from that country totalled \$13,800,000.

Indexes of Retail Sales in February

February retail sales averaged three per cent higher than in the preceding month and were six per cent higher than in February a year ago, according to returns received from a sample number of firms representing 14 different trades dealing chiefly in food, clothing and household requirements. The general sales index, on the base 1935-1939=100, stands at 146.8 for February, 143.1 for January and 139.0 for February 1944.

Commercial Failures in 1944

The number of commercial failures receded to a particularly low point in 1944, reflecting the prosperous condition of industrial enterprise. Assignments were less during 1944 than in any other year since the statistics were first collected shortly after the termination of the last war. The total was 218 compared with 314 in the preceding year. The number in 1939, the last peace-time year, was 1,392, more than six times as great as in 1944. The greatest number of business fatalities during the period from the end of the last war was shown in 1922 when failures reached the high total of 3,925.

Defaulted liabilities also reached a low point in 1944. A considerable decline was shown from 1943 and the total was less than in any other year since 1923 when the statistics of defaulted liabilities were first collected. The amount was reduced to \$3,101,435 against \$4,486,247 in the preceding year. The total in 1939 was \$15,089,461, while the maximum in the last 22 years was reached in 1923 at \$61,617,527.

Commercial failures of trading establishments in 1944 numbered 46 compared with 105 in 1943. In manufacturing, there were 32 failures compared with 23, in personal service 28 compared with 27, in professional service 20 compared with eight and in construction 27 compared with 41.

Employment Situation at February 1

There was continued important curtailment in general industrial activity at the beginning of February, repeating the situation indicated at midwinter in six of the last seven years. Previously, employment had usually, though not invariably, shown partial recovery at February 1 from the year-end lay-offs. The 15,074 firms furnishing data to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reported a combined working force of 1,820,842, as compared with 1,835,294 at January 1. This decline of 14,452 persons, or 0.8 per cent, lowered the index number of employment, on the base 1926=100, from 180.4 at January 1 to 178.9 at February 1, when it was 2.3 per cent below the February 1, 1944 figure of 83.2. Since the recession was contrary to the usual movement at February 1 in the experience of the period, 1929-37, used in calculating the factors of seasonal variation, the seasonally-adjusted index was also reduced, falling from 187.4 at January 1 to 185.9.

The resumption of operations on a more usual scale following the interruptions due to the year-end holidays brought about a substantial increase in the weekly payrolls reported at the beginning of February. These aggregated \$58,545,624, as compared with \$55,233,907 at January 1. The gain was six per cent. The per capita earnings, which had declined from \$32.19 at December 1 to \$30.10 at January 1, rose to \$32.15 at the latest date. The increase of \$2.05 in the weekly earnings at February 1 as compared with January 1 approximated that of \$2.07 indicated in the same comparison in 1944, which had then brought the February 1 average to \$31.76. In 1943, the mean at that date was \$29.96.

Improvement was indicated in manufacturing at the beginning of February, when the gain of 12,001 persons, or 1.1 per cent, was below the average at midwinter in the years since 1920, although it exceeded the advance at February 1, 1944. The increase over January 1 took place largely in the manufacture of non-durable goods, the largest being in textile factories. The trend was also favourable in the manufacture of durable goods, mainly in iron and steel plants. Among the non-manufacturing divisions, logging showed little general change; considerably greater activity was reported in mining, while curtailment largely seasonal in character, was indicated in communications, transportation, construction and maintenance, services and trade. The most pronounced losses were those of 5,342 persons in transportation, 10,458 in construction, and 12,642 in trade.

Production of Automobiles in February

Production of automobiles in Canada in February totalled 13,090 units compared with 13,745 in the preceding month and 13,930 in February 1944. During the first two months of the current year, 26,835 units were manufactured compared with 27,632 in the corresponding period of 1944. Production was limited to commercial cars, including trucks, buses, chassis, and military vehicles.

Factory Sales of Electric Storage Batteries

Sales of electric storage batteries and parts by principal Canadian producers during the fourth quarter of 1944 were valued at \$2,663,430 compared with \$2,409,278 in the preceding quarter and \$2,426,125 during October, November and December, 1943. Sales for the latest period included 330,289 batteries at \$1,806,624 for the ignition of internal combustion engines, 1,210 batteries at \$4,486 for motor cycle starting, 15,955 cells at \$120,824 for farm lighting plants, 1,724 cells at \$43,175 for railway service, batteries valued at \$408,612 for other purposes, including those for telephone switchboards, and miscellaneous parts and supplies for batteries valued at \$279,709.

Production of Iron and Steel in February

Production of pig iron in February amounted to 149,487 tons compared with 141,878 in the corresponding month of last year. The total for the latest month included 126,637 tons of basic iron, 9,403 tons of foundry iron and 13,447 tons of malleable iron.

Production of steel ingots and steel castings during February totalled 250,464 net tons compared with 229,852 in February 1944. Output in February of this year included 235,602 tons of ingots and 14,862 tons of castings. Output of ferro-alloys in February amounted to 13,402 net tons compared with 12,130 in the preceding month and 14,720 in the corresponding month of last year.

Economic Conditions during First Two Months of 1945

An advance was shown in the average of six major factors indicating the trend of economic conditions in the first two months of 1945 over the same period of last year. A determining factor was the marked increase in the deposit liabilities of the chartered banks. The standing for the sum of the four main classes was \$5,038,000,000 in the first two months of the present year, against \$4,245,000,000 in the same period of 1944, a gain of no less than 18.6 per cent. Bank deposits have shown a marked increase since the outbreak of hostilities, the upward trend having been continued during the last twelve months. The maximum in business operations was reached during the early part of 1944. A declining trend has since been in evidence. The index of the physical volume of business averaged 222.7 in the first two months of the present year against 244.3, a decline of 8.8 per cent. The downward trend was continued in February, the latest month for which statistics are available.

The changes in wholesale prices and in prices of high grade bonds were of minor proportions. The index of wholesale prices showed a slight increase as compared with the first two months of last year. As the index of bond yields receded from 97.3 to 96.6, it is evident that bond prices of this description averaged slightly higher in the early months of the present year. Speculative factors, including common stock prices and the volume of trading on the stock exchanges, reached a higher position in the first two months of the present year. The index of common stock prices rose 11.5 per cent in this comparison while speculative trading was at a higher level than at any other time since 1939.

Livestock marketings, as measured by sales in stock yards, rose 15.5 per cent in the first two months, a marked increase having been shown in the marketings of cattle. Hog sales were slightly greater in January than in the same month of last year, but a considerable decline was shown in the second month of the year. Wheat receipts in February were 12,800,000 bushels against 26,500,000 in the same month last year.

The shortage of labor was a handicap to the mining industry in the early months of 1945. The index of production dropped 36 per cent to 160.9. Gold receipts at the Mint were about 11 per cent less than in the first two months of last year. Coal production, on the other hand, showed an increase of nearly three per cent.

Owing mainly to the reduction in war contracts, the index of manufacturing production receded 10.5 per cent to 272.1. The standing in the first two months of 1944 was 304.0. The trend of the main components indicating activity in manufacturing plants was uneven in the first two months of the year, declines being predominant.

The output of newsprint showed moderate betterment, the total having been 504,427 short tons. As the production in the first two months of 1944 was 482,643 short tons, an increase of 4.5 per cent was indicated.

The output of steel ingots showed an increase of 10 per cent while the production of pig iron was 11.5 per cent greater. The consumption of firm power, a barometric indicator of considerable significance, receded 13.4 per cent. The consumption was 5,332,000,000 kilowatt hours compared with 6,157,000,000 in the same period of last year.

The total revenues of the Dominion Government during the eleven months from April to February was \$2,321,000,000, a decline of 6 per cent from the same period of the previous year. Ordinary expenditures showed an increase of 19.5 per cent in the same comparison, the total having been \$630,000,000. War expenditures, on the other hand, showed a decline of 10 per cent, the total in the first eleven months of the present fiscal year having been \$2,940,000,000. The United Nations Mutual Aid showed an increase of 1.4 per cent to \$682,000,000.

The national income computed on a tentative basis showed a decline of slightly more than two per cent in the first two months of the present year. The total was \$1,444,000,000 against \$1,475,000,000 in the first two months of 1944. The standing in February was \$707,600,000 against \$738,200,000 in the same month of last year. The national income in the first month of the present year was \$736,623,000 against \$736,562,000 in the same month of 1944.

Stocks of United States Corn in Canada

Stocks of United States corn in Canada on April 5 amounted to 101,078 bushels, being a sharp reduction from last year's corresponding total of 666,529 bushels.

Production of Copper and Nickel in January

The Canadian production of copper in January amounted to 44,381,428 pounds as compared with 46,079,163 in the preceding month and 49,149,825 in the corresponding month of last year. Nickel output in January was recorded at 23,770,268 pounds as compared with 21,766,969 in December and 23,545,474 in January 1944.

Car Loadings on Canadian Railways

Car loadings on Canadian railways for the week ended March 31 declined to 62,252 cars from 67,080 for the preceding week and 68,995 for the corresponding week of last year. The holiday on Good Friday was undoubtedly the chief factor in the decrease. Loadings declined in both the eastern and western divisions, the total for the former falling to 43,128 cars from 45,877 in the preceding week, and in the latter to 19,124 cars from 21,203.

Planing Mills and Sash and Door Factories

Planing mills and sash and door factories form an industrial group which comprises all establishments engaged wholly or chiefly in the production of sash, doors, frames, mill-work, moulding, and planed and matched lumber. There were 827 such establishments reporting to the Dominion Bureau of Statistics in 1943 and the value of products turned out was \$63,418,426, an advance of \$4,815,408 over the preceding year.

Reports Issued during the Week

1. Canadian Grain Statistics - Weekly (10 cents).
2. Production of Copper and Nickel, January (10 cents).
3. Economic Conditions in Canada during First Two Months of 1945 (10 cents).
4. Factory Sales of Electric Storage Batteries, Fourth Quarter, 1944 (10 cents).
5. Automobile Production, February (10 cents).
6. Production of Iron and Steel, February (10 cents).
7. Planing Mills and Sash and Door Factories, 1943 (10 cents).
8. The Employment Situation, February 1, 1945 (10 cents).
9. Car Loadings on Canadian Railways (10 cents).
10. Current Trends in Food Distribution, February (10 cents).
11. Monthly Index Numbers of Wholesale Sales, February (10 cents).
12. Indexes of Retail Sales, February (10 cents).
13. Sales and Purchases of Securities between Canada and Other Countries, January (10 cents).
14. Stocks of Dairy and Poultry Products, April 1 (10 cents).
15. Cold Storage Holdings of Fish (10 cents).
16. Stocks of Fruit and Vegetables, April 1 (10 cents).
17. Cold Storage Holdings of Meat and Lard, April 1 (10 cents).
18. Monthly Dairy Review of Canada, March (10 cents).
19. Commercial Failures in the Calendar Year 1944 (10 cents).

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