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HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE

Prices: Consumer price index was unchanged between February 1 and March 1 at 116.4. Year earlier it was 116.0 and in 12 months has varied only about 1%. Food component has dropped, however, to lowest point in five years, to only about 9% above the 1949 base level. Shelter index - at 131.6 on March 1 - has had the largest rise ... Wholesale industrial material prices eased slightly between February 24 and March 23, while prices of farm products at terminal markets moved upward with a rise for field products outweighing a decline for animal products ... The general wholesale price level averaged slightly higher for February than January at 222.2 and was 4.8 points above a year earlier ... Investors' index of common stock issues made the sharpest advance in five years for a four-week period between February 23 and March 22. (Pages 2 to 4)

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Mining: Iron ore shipments continued a sharp rise in February with bigger part of increase to Canadian consumers ... Coal production and imports both rose in February ... January output of nickel, copper, zinc and silver was up over last year; lead down. (Pages 4 & 5)

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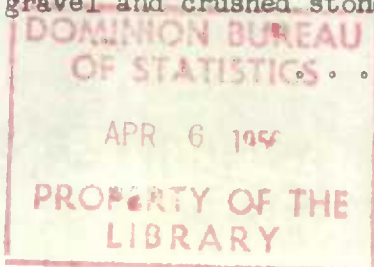
Furs: Total fur output last season jumped 54% in number of pelts and 58% in overall value. The increases were mainly due to sharp increases in the take of beaver, muskrat and squirrel and higher prices for beaver, muskrat and mink pelts. Mink accounted for about half the total value. (Page 5)

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Agriculture: This year's Spring pig crop is expected to be about 2% larger than last year, a rise in eastern Canada promising to provide that total margin over a decrease in the West ... Area planted to commercial vegetables last year was about 14% greater than in 1954; estimated yields were larger for 8 of 13 leading commercial crops. (Page 6)

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Transportation: Railway carloadings were 9.3% larger in the third week of March than last year, up over 14% from the first of year. Major gains since January 1 have been in grain, coal, iron and steel products, crude petroleum, sand, gravel and crushed stone, and pulpwood; biggest in grain. (Page 8)



Consumer Price Index Unchanged
Between February 1 And March 1

Canada's consumer price index was unchanged at 116.4 between February 1 and March 1. A year ago it stood fractionally lower at 116.0.

During this 12-month period the index has reflected considerable stability of prices and has ranged only about 1% between 115.9 and 116.9. In the current month, slight increases in the shelter, clothing, household operation and "other" commodities and services indexes were offset by a decrease of 0.7% in the food index from 109.9 to 109.1.

This marks the lowest point the food index has reached in five years, and it now stands about 9% above its pre-Korean level. Between February 1 and March 1 there were further price decreases for all cuts of beef and most other meat items, together with lower prices for processed cheese, lard, shortening and most canned fruits. Somewhat higher prices were recorded for oranges, coffee, eggs, and some fresh vegetables.

The shelter series remained practically unchanged, moving from 131.5 to 131.6, following fractional increases in both rent and home-ownership components. Small scattered increases among clothing items were sufficient to move the clothing index from 108.6 to 108.7. The household operation component also advanced 0.1% from 116.7 to 116.8 under the influence of a few small increases. Higher prices for new passenger cars as compared to those prevailing last autumn, as well as higher quotations for automobile tires and repairs, and hospital rates, were responsible for moving the "other" commodities and services index from 119.3 to 119.9. (1)

Consumer Price Indexes (1949=100)

		Total Index	Food	Shelter	Clothing	Household Operation	Other Commodities And Services
March	1, 1956	116.4	109.1	131.6	108.7	116.8	119.9
February	1, 1956	116.4	109.9	131.5	108.6	116.7	119.3
March	1, 1955	116.0	110.7	128.6	108.0	117.0	118.3

Wholesale Price Index
Slightly Lower In March

The weekly composite index for 30 industrial material prices at wholesale, on the 1935-39 base, declined 0.2% from 249.2 to 248.8 between February 24 and

March 23. Price declines for sisal, tin, raw cotton and steers overbalanced increases for linseed oil, oats, beef hides, wheat, raw sugar and raw rubber.

Canadian farm products at terminal markets advanced 1.2% as the composite index changed from 195.8 to 198.1. A rise of 3.9% in the field products index from 159.7 to 165.9 reflected a sharp increase in eastern potato prices and lesser gains for Ontario barley corn and wheat, and western hay, rye and potatoes. Eastern hay and western flax, on the other hand, registered losses.

The animal products index decline of 0.7% from 232.0 to 230.3 represented lower prices for calves, hogs, steers, eastern lambs and wool which overbalanced increases for eggs, eastern poultry and cheesemilk and western lambs. (1)

General Wholesale Price Index Higher In February Canada's general wholesale price index, on the 1953-39 base, advanced to 222.2 in February from 222.0 a month earlier and 217.4 a year ago, according to the Bureau's monthly report on prices and price indexes. As compared with January, six of the major component groups advanced, one declined, and one remained unchanged.

Non-ferrous metals registered the largest gain over January, moving up 0.7% to 203.6 as increases in copper, silver and zinc were only partially offset by decreases in lead, tin and solder. Fibres, textiles and textile products rose 0.5% to 228.9 as a result of higher prices for raw cotton, cotton yarns, cotton fabrics, carpets, rayon yarns, and miscellaneous fibre products, while nylon hosiery and imported raw wool showed price decreases.

Vegetable products advanced 0.3% to 193.3 when increases in grains, vegetable oils and their products, potatoes, onions, green coffee beans, imported fresh fruits, canned fruits, prairie hay, and dried fruits outweighed decreases in raw rubber, live stock and poultry feeds, and brewers' malt.

Iron and its products rose 0.2% to 231.1 in response to higher prices for scrap iron, iron castings and certain hardware items. Chemicals and allied products advanced 0.2% to 178.6, increases in industrial gases, inorganic chemicals, fertilizers, and drugs and pharmaceuticals overbalanced a decrease in paint materials.

Increases in United States coal, pottery and sulphur moved non-metallic minerals and their products up 0.1% to 178.9. Animal products declined 0.7% to 217.4 due to decreases in steers, fresh meats, fowl, eggs, hides and skins, cured meats, fishery products, tallow and raw furs; a small increase occurred for cheese in the milk products sub-group.

Wood, wood products and paper remained unchanged at 305.8. A slightly higher mid-month rate for the United States dollar in Canadian funds caused small increases in newsprint, woodpulp and cedar shingles for export; but these, coupled with an increase in pine lumber, were balanced by a decrease in fir lumber.

Canadian farm product prices at terminal markets were slightly lower between January and February as the composite index dropped 0.4% to 195.9 from 196.7. The animal products series receded to 232.3 from 235.0, reflecting lower prices for steers, eggs, and eastern poultry and cheesemilk which overbalanced minor increases for hogs, lambs and calves. On the other hand, field products rose to 159.5 from 158.4 as prices advanced sharply for potatoes in the West. Moderate increases were noted for potatoes in eastern markets, while flax, rye, western hay and Ontario corn and oats were also higher. The price of Ontario wheat was somewhat lower.

The residential building materials index, on the 1935-39 base, remained unchanged at 289.6 in February as minor offsetting price changes occurred for a few items. Some plumbing series, notably pipe, and spruce lumber registered gains, while offsetting decreases were reported for fir dimensions and shellac.

The index of non-residential materials, on the base 1949 = 100, rose fractionally to 126.9 from 126.7. Higher prices for metals were, in turn, translated into firmer quotations among plumbing and heating equipment, and hardware series. Eastern spruce lumber also reflected strength, while declines occurred in shellac, building block and certain fir lumber specifications. (2)

Security Price Indexes Higher The investors' index of 96 common stock issues, on the 1935-39 base, rose 7.4% from 252.4 to 271.2 between February 23 and March 22 to register the sharpest advance over a four-week period since February 1951. All group indexes were higher: 76 industrials advanced 8.6% from 261.8 to 284.3; 13 utilities 3% from 205.1 to 211.3; and 7 banks 4.4% from 266.8 to 278.5.

Increases of 11.5% and 10.9% for oils and machinery and equipment, respectively, were followed by major gains industrial mines, transportation, building materials, pulp and paper, and textiles and clothing. Only telephones, down fractionally, failed to share in the general upward movement.

Mining stocks were also appreciably stronger as the composite index for 27 issues rose 9% from 126.9 to 138.3, reflecting gains of 12.3% for 5 base metals from 241.3 to 271.1, and 4.4% for 22 golds from 76.9 to 80.3. (1)

Security Price Indexes

<u>Investors' Price Index</u>	<u>March 29</u>	<u>March 22</u> 1935-39 - 100	<u>March 1</u>
Total Common Stocks	275.9	271.2	257.5
Industrials	288.9	284.3	267.9
Utilities	211.7	211.3	207.5
Banks	293.9	278.5	269.0

Mining Stock Price Index

Total Mining Stocks	138.2	138.3	128.1
Golds	80.3	80.3	77.7
Base Metals	270.7	271.1	243.5

M I N I N G

Iron Ore Shipments Up Sharply Again In February Shipments of iron ore from Canadian mines continued sharply higher in February. DBS reports the month's total at 139,131 tons versus 83,704 a year earlier, bringing January-February shipments to 515,481 tons versus 192,725.

Shipments of ore to Canadian consumers rose to 72,779 tons in February from 24,378 and to 275,603 tons in the two-month period from 35,867. Ore shipped for export increased to 66,352 tons in February from 59,326 and to 239,878 tons in the two months from 156,858. (3)

Asbestos Shipments Lower Shipments of asbestos from Canadian mines eased slightly to 67,853 tons in February from 68,520 a year earlier and to 126,724 tons in the two months, January and February, from 129,486 tons. Exports rose in January to 65,661 tons from 56,175 a year ago. (4)

Production And Imports Of Coal Up In February Both domestic production and landed imports of coal were larger in February than in the corresponding month last year. The month's output amounted to 1,420,000 tons versus 1,277,000 a year earlier, bringing January-February production to 3,087,000 tons versus 2,726,000. Landed imports amounted to 734,000 tons in February versus 605,000, boosting the two-month total to 1,459,000 tons from 1,194,000. (5)

Production Of Nickel, Copper, Zinc & Silver Up In January, Lead Lower Canadian production of nickel, copper, zinc and silver was larger in January than a year earlier, but the output of lead was smaller. Production of nickel amounted to 14,985 tons (14,387 a year earlier); copper, 28,172 tons (26,370); zinc, 37,316 tons (36,488); lead, 15,906 tons (18,959); and silver, 2,247,955 fine ounces (2,182,386. (6 & 7)

F U R P R O D U C T I O N

Sharp Increases In Production And Value Of Furs In 1954-55 Boosted by sharp increases in the take of beaver, muskrat and squirrel pelts, total production of furs jumped 54% in the 1954-55 season as compared with the preceding year, according to advance figures released by DBS. The rise in production was accompanied by an increase of 58% in overall value with better prices for beaver, muskrat and mink pelts. The total number of pelts taken from wild-life and ranch-raised animals was 9,670,796 valued at \$30,509,515. Fur farm production accounted for 43% of the total value compared with 49% in 1953-54.

By value the leading furs were: mink, \$15,428,000 (\$11,279,000 in 1953-54); muskrat, \$6,519,000 (\$3,159,000); beaver, \$4,767,000 (\$2,562,000); squirrel, \$1,287,000 (\$809,000). The numbers of these pelts produced were: mink, 796,000 (704,000 in 1953-54); muskrat, 5,619,000 (3,362,000); beaver, 320,000 (242,000); and squirrel, 2,332,000 (1,462,000).

Number and Value of Pelts Produced, 1954-1955

	Wild Life	Value	Ranchd-Raised	Value
	No.	\$	No.	\$
Nfld.	24,840	47,770	1,051	15,765
P.E.I.	1,556	1,820	6,508	113,750
N.S.	95,563	207,151	18,997	340,080
N.B.	49,990	183,543	11,181	173,182
Que.	294,410	1,750,257	55,553	1,015,090
Ont.	1,107,530	4,285,803	160,413	2,957,267
Man	1,714,977	2,969,804	164,180	3,068,972
Sask.	2,675,934	3,715,011	45,045	840,791
Alta.	1,893,093	2,078,381	136,245	2,504,556
B.C.	424,592	774,570	98,012	2,056,089
N.W.T.	477,611	1,166,919	-	-
Yukon	213,515	242,944	-	-
Canada	8,973,611	17,423,973	697,185	13,085,542

Increase Of 2% In Spring Pig Crop This year's Spring pig crop should be about 2% above the crop farrowed in the Spring of 1955, according to estimates based on farmers' reports on March 1. This represents farrowing of some 639,000 sows between December 1, 1955 and May 31 this year, compared with 627,800 a year earlier. This estimate constitutes a downward revision of the prospects of 646,600 estimated three months ago, based on breeding and farrowing intentions reported at December 1.

The anticipated 2% increase results from a reported 5% rise in eastern Canada, coupled with a 2% drop in the West. The December survey had pointed to probable increases of 4% in the East and 1% in the West. It is estimated that 227,000 sows farrowed during the period December 1955 to February 1956, and that 412,000 will farrow during March, April and May.

Quebec is the only province where producers have indicated an upward revision of farrowing intentions for the December - May period. The Maritimes and Ontario show no change from their expectations reported at December 1. However, at March 1 reports from the West indicated a decrease from previously reported intentions in all four provinces. Spring farrowings are now expected to exceed those of last year by 3% (forecast of 6% in December) in Saskatchewan and by about 4% (forecast of 8% in December) in British Columbia, while farrowings in Alberta and Manitoba are expected to decrease from last Spring by about 3 and 9%, respectively, rather than by the moderate 1% decrease indicated for these provinces by the intentions reported at Dec 1. (8)

Sales Of Fluid Milk And Cream Up 5% In January Sales of fluid milk and cream, the latter expressed in terms of milk, amounted to an estimated 456,357,000 pounds in January, an increase of 5% over a year earlier. All provinces except Prince Edward Island shared in the increase.

Sales were up 3% in Nova Scotia to 15,049,000 pounds, 1% in New Brunswick to 12,591,000, 4% in Quebec to 174,163,000, 6% in Ontario to 155,929,000, 9% in Manitoba to 20,109,000, 4% in Saskatchewan to 20,910,000, 5% in Alberta to 24,129,000, and 6% in British Columbia to 31,129,000. The decline in Prince Edward Island was 2% to 2,357,000 pounds. (9)

Area, Yield And Production Of Commercial Vegetables Area planted to commercial vegetables in Canada in 1955 was 198,620 acres, an increase of 14% over the preceding year's 174,460. Of the 13 individual vegetable crops for which estimates are available, 8 showed increased acreages, average yields and production, and the other 5 decreases. Growing conditions were somewhat variable during the 1955 season. Extremely hot weather throughout much of eastern Canada restricted crop development to some extent, except where irrigation was available.

The year's production of vegetables was as follows, 1954 totals being in brackets (in thousands of pounds): a paragus, 7,231 (6,206); beans, 34,722 (39,413); beets, 48,658 (49,966); cabbage, 104,722 (107,512); carrots, 152,574 (136,747); cauliflower, 24,340 (25,498); celery, 55,646 (55,141); corn, 250,188 (211,608); lettuce, 53,795 (76,844); onions 121,630 (110,305); peas, 113,852 (87,990); spinach, 13,550 (12,895); and tomatoes, 678,104 (569,728). (10)

Production Of Eggs In February Production of eggs in February amounted to an estimated 34,100,000 dozen versus 37,200,000 in the preceding month and 33,900,000 in the corresponding month last year. In the two months, January and February, production totalled 71,400,000 dozen versus 72,100,000. (11)

MANUFACTURING

Production And Shipments Of Veneers And Plywoods Higher Larger quantities of both veneers and plywoods were produced and shipped in January than a year earlier. Production of veneers rose to 91,411,000 square feet from 76,550,000, shipments to 87,220,000 square feet from 79,265,000, and month-end stocks to 28,085,000 square feet from 27,976,000. Output of plywood increased to 97,420,000 square feet from 85,583,000, shipments to 105,596,000 square feet from 75,659,000, but the stocks fell to 38,561,000 square feet from 58,185,000. (12)

Clay Product Sales Up In Value In Year 1955 Producers' sales of products made from Canadian clays in the full year 1955 were valued at \$34,200,000, an increase of almost 9% over the preceding year's \$31,394,000. Sales of building bricks moved up to \$21,807,000 from \$20,790,000, sewer pipe to \$4,217,000 from \$3,444,000, structural tile to \$3,669,000 from \$3,482,000, drain tile to \$2,422,000 from \$2,064,000, pottery to \$535,000 from \$437,000, and fireclay blocks and shapes to \$419,000 from \$333,000. (13)

Hat And Cap Industry In 1954 Products shipped by Canada's hat and cap industry in 1954 were worth \$28,271,000, down 4.6% from the preceding year's \$29,632,000, according to the Bureau's annual industry report. The number of establishments rose to 169 from 166, but their employees fell to 4,708 from 4,928 and salary and wage payments to \$10,790,000 from \$11,058,000. Material costs eased to \$11,306,000 from \$11,741,000.

Women's straw hats replaced men's fur felt hats as the industry's most important commodity, the change resulting from a substantial reduction in the volume of men's fur felts and not from an increase in women's straws which were also shipped in reduced quantities. Shipments of women's straw hats amounted to 130,774 dozen worth \$5,027,806 compared with 137,547 dozen valued at \$5,180,098. Deliveries of men's fur felt hats dropped to 88,317 dozen worth \$4,462,010 from 103,377 dozen worth \$5,298,591.

Shipments of other main commodities in order of value were: cloth caps, 237,157 dozen valued at \$2,581,623; women's velour hats, 44,153 dozen at \$2,238,441; women's wool felt hats, 75,655 dozen at \$2,009,302; and women's fur felt hats, 29,221 dozen at \$1,556,069. (14)

Sharp Decline In Production
Of Agricultural Implements

Canada's agricultural implements industry shipped \$119,006,000 worth of products in 1954, a sharp drop of 30.5% from the preceding year's \$171,270,000, according to the Bureau's annual industry report. Farm implements accounted for \$109,099,000 of the total as compared with \$156,287,000, the balance being miscellaneous types of machinery and parts. Farm machinery manufactured in other industries was valued at \$3,990,000 versus \$3,564,000 in 1953.

Total Canadian production of most types of farm equipment decreased in 1954. Output of plows dropped to 15,443 units from 21,577, mowers to 7,006 units from 13,930, harrows to 65,365 units from 88,906, grain binders to 320 units from 1,763, threshers and reaper-threshers to 12,891 units from 21,870, seed drills to 3,848 units from 7,669, cream separators to 3,227 units from 3,426, one-way discs, harrow-plows and tiller-combines to 8,006 units from 17,073, cultivators to 9,649 units from 13,558, hay loaders to 1,674 units from 4,755, hay rakes to 7,773 units from 11,539, and manure spreaders to 6,024 units from 11,821.

There were 76 establishments in the industry in 1954, 4 less than in the preceding year. They employed 11,805 persons versus 14,161 and paid \$40,225,000 in salaries and wages versus \$50,302,000. Cost of fuel and electricity was \$1,742,000 versus \$1,825,000, and \$66,712,000 was expended on materials versus \$90,345,000. (15)

TRANSPORTATION

Railway Car Loadings Up
9.3% In 3rd Week Of March

Railway car loadings in the third week of March amounted to 74,723 cars, up 9.3% from last year's corresponding total of 68,370 cars. From the beginning of the year to March 21 loadings aggregated 866,105 cars, an increase of 14.4% over last year's 756,920 cars. Receipts from connections increased 8.1% in the third March week to 35,854 cars from 33,166, and 13% in the cumulative period to 400,526 cars from 354,295.

Commodities carried in greater volume in the week included: grain, 6,874 cars (versus 4,874 in 1955); iron and steel products, 1,741 (1,323); crude petroleum, 1,052 (485); fuel oil, 2,950 (2,456); sand, gravel and crushed stone, 2,219 (1,807); logs, posts, poles and piling, 1,332 (775); pulpwood, 3,574 (2,413); and, miscellaneous carload commodities, 5,296 (4,776). Iron ore rose 202.4% to 487 cars.

Most substantial increases in the January 1 - March 21 period occurred in: grain, 82,160 (versus 60,523 in 1955); coal, 64,794 (55,483); iron and steel products, 17,745 (12,445); crude petroleum, 11,204 (5,806); sand, gravel and crushed stone, 22,918 (17,577); pulpwood, 54,132 (48,002); and miscellaneous carload commodities, 58,005 (48,850). (16)

MERCHANDISING

Department Store Sales
Increased 24.9% In Week

Department store sales rose 24.9% during the week ending March 24 as compared with a year earlier. Sales gains were recorded for all provinces: Atlantic Provinces, 15.7%; Quebec, 25.6%; Ontario, 29.7%; Manitoba, 17.4%; Saskatchewan, 39.7%; Alberta, 25.2%; and British Columbia, 17.8%.

(Publications are numbered similarly to news items to indicate source of latter)

- 1-Price Movements, March, 10¢
- 2-Prices & Price Indexes, February, 25¢
- 3-M: Iron Ore, February, 10¢
- 4-M: Asbestos, February, 10¢
- 5-M: Preliminary Report on Coal Production, February, 10¢
- 6-M: Copper & Nickel Production, January, 10¢
- 7-M: Silver, Lead & Zinc Production, January, 10¢
- 8-M: Report on Live Stock Surveys -- Hogs, March 1, 1956, 10¢
- 9-M: Fluid Milk Sales, January, 10¢
- 10-M: Acreage & Production of Commercial Vegetables, 1955, 10¢
- 11-M: Production of Eggs, February, 10¢
- 12-M: Peeler Logs, Veneers & Plywoods, January, 10¢
- 13-M: Products Made From Canadian Clays, December, 10¢
- 14-Hat & Cap Industry, 1954, 25¢
- 15-Agricultural Implements Industry, 1954, 25¢
- 16-M: Car Loadings On Canadian Railways, March 21, 10¢
- Quarterly Bulletin of Agricultural Statistics, October-December, 1955, 25¢
- M: Memorandum

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