

GOVERNMENT ACTION IN PRESENT WORLD FOOD SHORTAGE

The Canadian government foresaw the present world food shortage. It has patterned its production program in the past to help meet it.

In outlining the Canadian government's food export and conservation program on March 17, 1946, Prime Minister Mackenzie King said "the government has been giving continuous and careful consideration to the extremely serious shortage of food in the world today. Long before the end of the war it was realized that the close of hostilities would not automatically be followed by an increase in food supplies. It was known that the problems of providing food for liberated areas would continue to be substantial until agriculture in these areas had resumed a more normal and stable condition... Since a food shortage had been foreseen and major preparations had been made by Canada to help meet it, adjustments and improvements within the pattern of action already taken constitute the only practical way of increasing immediate and effective help in meeting the urgent and pressing need. All practicable means are being or will be taken to make available for export the maximum supply of foodstuffs."

Mr. King further stated that "in proportion to our population Canada has exported, to meet the needs of the world over the past few years, more food than any other nation... The efforts of Canadian food producers did not relax with the end of the war. We have sought to maintain and even to increase exports. Care has to be taken that further expansion in any one field of production does not hamper our output of other necessary foodstuffs which we are exporting in large quantities. We would not be assisting the world situation by concentration on great additional increases of wheat acreage and thereby reducing the production of coarse grains needed for feed purposes. Coarse grains are already in relatively short supply. Further curtailment would restrict our livestock program.

"In view of the present high level of production, the possibility of further increase in our efforts is subject to definite limitations. Nevertheless even small savings, when added together, will amount to substantial relief. One pound of flour will keep a person alive for a day. An additional 10,000,000 bushels of wheat from Canada would maintain life for 15,000,000 people for a month."

In addition to maintaining the already large food export program, Mr. King's proposals to the Canadian people may be summarized as follows:

1. Farmers are urged to plan their production to obtain the maximum yield of foodstuffs over the next four years.
2. A publicity campaign to encourage saving by consumers in the use of wheat and wheat products and to encourage home gardens has been undertaken.
3. The reduction of inventories of wheat and wheat products is encouraged.
4. Regulations affecting bulk shipments of flour and feed are modified.
5. Priorities for rail transport of wheat for export have been established.
6. Increased quantities of oats and No. 4 wheat are to be made available for export if possible.
7. Wheat available for domestic milling is being reduced by 10% on the basis of 1945 purchases.