

The "Review of the World Food Situation" prepared by the Council of FAO presents a disturbing picture. Parts of it, in fact, must raise the question in the minds of many as to whether FAO's goal of a better-nourished world is likely to be realized - at least in the foreseeable future.

The picture presented in that report shows that, while total world agricultural production has regained pre-war levels, it has not kept up with increasing world population - and that the supplies available per person are still below pre-war levels. Even more serious, however, is the fact that although production gains by countries are unevenly distributed, monetary difficulties are threatening to prevent freedom of movement of foods and other necessary products from "surplus" to "deficit" areas. This, in turn, might easily lead to a slackening of the productive effort in some countries and an increase in costs which may deny food to the people of other countries.

"Most under-developed countries," states the report, envisage reduced imports and expanded exports of food and agricultural products, even where food consumption is low. This is related to their desire to have the maximum possible quantity of foreign exchange available for purchases required in connection with industrialization and general economic development, and to their general inability to export any large quantity of products other than food and raw materials."

Canada's difficulties are not confined to those stated. We are also producers of other natural products, particularly mineral wealth, and importing countries are now forced, in view of currency difficulties, to use their scarce dollars for the purchase of minerals and other products and to leave food on our hands. This would deny Canada her natural market abroad for food, would deny her natural customers food, and would accordingly limit her ability to buy goods from other countries. Canada, which is the largest customer of the United States, would be prevented from buying United States manufactured products.

Again, the Report states, "The majority of the more developed countries have policies designed to reduce food imports and expand food production. Most, though not all of these countries, are driven to these policies by their balance of payments and other post-war difficulties."

This threat of accumulating food supplies in some parts of the world while people in other parts of the world are under-fed must evoke unpleasant memories in many of us. We saw something like this a score of years ago - and all of us can recall the miseries of the world depression that resulted. At that time, world trade in food and other commodities broke down because of trade barriers set up by many countries - some, but not all of them based on the desire of nations preparing for war to achieve self-sufficiency at any cost. The ideals of member nations of FAO are vastly different today - but monetary difficulties threaten the same lamentable result.

...Our monetary difficulties today threaten to reproduce the situation which existed twenty years ago, a lack of that free movement of food from those with food to spare to those in want. And unless some way can be found of solving this problem we cannot hope for that "all-out" effort by exporting countries that is needed if the people of the whole world are to be adequately fed. In other words, it is difficult to persuade a farmer to produce more food for the hungry in some other land if he sees no likelihood of its ever getting to the people who need it - if, in short, it is likely to remain on his hands... The representative from