

Supply—Agriculture

There are several ways to give this protection without resorting to subsidies or forms of direct government expenditure. Authority is provided under the Customs Act to fix a fair market value for imports of any product from countries, other than those in the commonwealth, if their importation causes injury to Canadian producers. Valuations made under this authority apply for the purpose of assessing special dumping duties, which are added to the ordinary duties. Other means of protection would include tariff quotas, import controls, and establishment of state monopolies such as the Canadian wheat board.

I may say in this connection that there has been a very wide demand in the past year for the imposition of fair value for duty particularly on a wide range of fruit and vegetables. Under the GATT agreement we have to make out a case before fair value for duty can be declared and in a large number of these instances it has not been possible to make out a case which would justify making use of fair value for duty.

I should say something more with regard to exports, and go into a little more detail. Exports of agricultural products in 1957 amounted to \$909 million. This was a little lower than the \$1,013 million of the year before but higher than in 1954 and 1955. Agricultural exports continued to make up about 20 per cent of total commodity exports. Figures for the first five months of this year show that agricultural exports are continuing at a high level, running about 12 per cent above those in the corresponding period last year.

As stated earlier, Canada has been the only one of the four major wheat exporting countries to have exports of wheat and flour in the current crop year at a higher level than in the same period a year earlier. From last August 1 up to the end of March this year Canada exported 194 million bushels of wheat compared with 176 million in the corresponding period last year, an increase of about 10 per cent. Total wheat exports from all four countries were about 23 per cent lower in the August-March period this crop year than last. Canada has also increased her share of the total wheat trade, supplying 36 per cent of total wheat exports from the four countries compared with 25 per cent in the year earlier.

I think this increase in our wheat exports is one of the most favourable features as far as agriculture is concerned.

Mr. Pearson: Could the minister tell us how much of that increase is due to gifts and long-term credit under the Colombo plan?

[Mr. Harkness.]

Mr. Harkness: I have not the breakdown in figures available at the moment but the actual exports for cash were considerably higher during this period than in the same period a year earlier; our total share of the world cash trade was very much larger than it was a year ago.

Legislation proclaimed last November 25 provided for making cash advances on a quota of farm-stored grain in western Canada—50 cents a bushel for wheat, 20 cents for oats and 35 cents for barley. This materially aided the cash position of western farmers and the whole Canadian economy last winter and spring.

Now I should like to say something about a few other major commodities. First, cattle. Cattle represent, probably, the brightest spot in the last six or seven months in the entire agricultural picture.

Mr. Gour: That is right.

Mr. Harkness: Cattle and calves at June 1, 1957, numbered 11.3 million, 2.6 per cent more than in 1956, and an all time record. Net marketings—total less feeders returned to farms for further feeding—reached a record of 2.3 million head, an increase of 17 per cent over 1956. The record rate of output continued in the first quarter of 1958 when 602,000 head were marketed, a rise of 30 per cent over the first quarter of 1957. In other words, marketing has continued to increase so that it is 30 per cent higher in the first quarter of this year than in the first quarter of last year. Canadians consumed an average of 75 pounds of beef per person, slightly more than in 1956. This compared with a per person consumption of 55 pounds in 1935-39, and 60 pounds in 1946-50. The improvement in our cattle position has been due to a great extent to the fact that Canadians are eating more beef. That demand has meant better prices, of course, and also the possibility of greater production.

Although Canadians consumed a large proportion of the beef that was produced, about 21 per cent of commercial marketings were exported either as live cattle or beef, in 1957, compared with only 4 per cent of the total in 1956. In the first quarter of 1958 exports of cattle and beef were the equivalent of 175,000 head about 29 per cent of commercial marketings.

Some 376,000 head of cattle were exported in 1957, seven times as many as in 1956. The movement increased spectacularly in the last half of the year owing mainly to heavy sales of feeders to United States buyers. This heavy buying continued in the