



High on the list of available world food supplies, and of Canadian trading commodities, is the wheat produced on the Canadian Prairies. Much of the grain is gathered at the Lakehead, where it is stored in massive grain-elevators for transfer to ships. Above, the S.S. Simcoe is seen being loaded at Thunder Bay.

faces with their neighbours. In fact, food aid has helped elite groups who do not give high priority to agriculture and food production for the masses to remain in power for long periods.

Dramatic change

In recent years, however, the politics and economics of food have undergone a dramatic change. With surpluses depleted, a high demand for food all over the world and the entry of prosperous new buyers into the market, it is not in the interest of the exporting countries to give food aid. During 1972-75, commercial food exports increased from \$1.7 billion to \$7 billion. Thus "Food-for-Peace" programs have been transformed into "Food-for-Cash" programs. It is evident that the present food shortage is not because of drastic changes in supply but rather because of the changing nature of demand and consequent economic policies of the exporting nations.

Food shortages of the Seventies and the example of the Arab oil embargo have led to a re-emphasis on the use of food as an instrument of power politics. The idea

of food power acquired quite an impetus in the United States after the CIA produced a report predicting enormous political gains and hegemony over the world for the U.S. in the wake of future food shortages. According to this report, in addition to growing demand, the climatic changes in the regions outside the United States would work to the detriment of future food production in the U.S.S.R., China, Canada and some monsoon regions of Asia and Africa. This would give the U.S. a quasi-monopoly over the exportation of food, leading to U.S. hegemony in the world comparable to the U.S. position during the late Forties.

Even if one accepts the CIA forecast, the exercise of food power has certain inherent limitations. The countries most subject to U.S. food power will be those that in future are likely to have the largest food deficits. Most estimates indicate that, with the exception of Japan, the countries that fall into this category are the poorest countries of Asia and Africa. One wonders what is the significance of having "power" of life and death over a country like Bangladesh or over the Sahel region of

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