

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

At the office of the Food Controller, Ottawa, there are received every day large numbers of inquiries for specific information. It has been thought wise to devote some space to answer the more important of these queries.

1—Q. What makes possible the low price of bread in Great Britain?

A. The price of bread in Great Britain is low because the Government has subsidized flour; that is, it controls the wheat and flour markets and lets the user have flour at figures below actual cost, paying the difference from the Exchequer. The New York Times explains the situation thus: "The fact that some food taken from here is sold cheaper across the ocean is not a reason to expect that prices can be equally cheapened here, for the reason that the foreign price is not an economic price. British millers can get no grain except from the Food Controller, and they are supplied only upon condition of selling cheaper flour. The cheaper flour is sold to the bakers only on condition of their selling cheap bread. The difference is a subsidy from the Exchequer."

2—Q. How long has official food control been in effect in Great Britain?

A. Food control was officially established on December 26, 1916.

3—Q. Has the Food Controller for Canada fixed the price of potatoes at \$1.25 per bag of 90 pounds?

A. No. The Food Controller has announced his intention of requiring regularly information from all wholesale dealers and the difference between the original cost and the wholesaler's selling price will not be allowed to exceed a reasonable percentage.

4—Q. Is the statement correct that at the present time foodstuffs are being sold in the United States at from 25 per cent to 40 per cent cheaper than in Canada as a result of stringent measures adopted by the United States Food Administrator?

A. No. On such commodities as bread and milk the prices are lower in Canada. The general levels of food prices are very close together for the two countries. An article in this edition compares prices in considerable detail.

5—Q. Who is responsible for enforcing the regulations of the Food Controller?

A. Regulations recommended by the Food Controller and approved by Order in Council are now part of the law of Canada and as such should be enforced by the regular police authorities.

6—Q. Why does brown bread cost the consumer as much as white bread?

A. The demand for graham bread has been so limited that the product has to be made by hand, and, consequently, the labour cost is somewhat greater than in the case of white bread, which is produced on a large scale by machinery. The materials in the brown bread should cost less, although the saving to the baker is not as large as some people seem to imagine. The Food Controller has now the power to secure returns from wholesale dealers in food products and has announced his intention to see that profits shall not exceed a reasonable amount. Information as to costs of production are being secured and a maximum has already been fixed for the profits of the millers. It is not primarily with a view to economy in cost that the Food Controller has suggested brown bread as a possible substitute for white bread, but because such substitution, if effected on a large scale, would mean an important saving in wheat.

7. Q. "How do you explain your statement that there is a world shortage of wheat?"

A. The allied countries of Europe, according to official estimates, will have a deficiency of more than 400,000,000 bushels of wheat this year, basing the estimate on normal requirements. They are isolated from those markets other than Canada and the United States on which they were accustomed to rely before the war. The Russian supply cannot be got out and the Bulgarian and Rumanian supplies are in the hands of the Teutons. Although Great Britain, France, and Italy are vigorously administering and economizing their food, the situation in wheat, according to the food administration is one of great difficulty and concern. The latest official estimate is that Canada will have a possible surplus of about 138,000,000 bushels of wheat and that added to the surplus of the United States will make only about 215,000,000 bushels.