

*Urban population growing at
~~expense of rural~~
 expense of Rural*

Let us, looking out again through the window of your trade, attempt to make something of a national survey of Canadian conditions as they affect the high cost of living. Once we do this, we are immediately confronted with one of the most amazing situations, and at the same time one of the most serious tendencies to be imagined. Instead of rural development being what we would hope and expect it ought to be, that is to say, considerably ahead of, or even keeping pace with, the growth of population in urban centres, we find that at present, and for many years past, the tendency would appear to be entirely the other way. The population of our cities and towns relatively has been forging away ahead of the population in the rural areas. The number of consumers demanding food in urban centres has steadily increased, whilst the number of persons producing food has relatively steadily declined.

Unfortunately, the only national statistics we have are those of the Dominion Census of 1911 for Ontario, and the Eastern Provinces, and a somewhat later census for the prairie provinces; but it is safe to say that the tendencies they represent have been emphasized rather than diminished in the years that have since intervened.

Some remarkable Statistics

Going back to the beginning of this century and starting with the Eastern Provinces, making our survey from East to West, what do we find? First of all, that in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, from 1901 to 1911, the urban population showed comparatively large increases, whilst in these provinces and in Prince Edward Island the rural population decreased materially. In the Province of Quebec, the urban population increased by 314,383 from 1901 to 1911, and the rural population increased by only 39,951. In the old Province of Ontario, the urban population increased by 392,511 in the ten years from 1901 to 1911, and totalled in actual figures 1,328,489, while in the same period of time the rural population decreased by 52,184, and numbered the lesser total of 1,194,785.