

*Supply—Agriculture*

and most yields were well above recent averages. In Nova Scotia, unusually dry weather resulted in a hay shortage.

Perhaps the outstanding development in export trade last year occurred in the livestock industry. Despite the fact that domestic consumption of beef was at a record high level, about 21 per cent of commercial marketings in 1957 were exported as live cattle or beef. This represents a substantial increase in export trade, compared with only 4 per cent of total marketings in 1956. In the first quarter of this year—that is 1958—exports of cattle and beef were the equivalent of about 29 per cent of commercial marketings.

Another interesting feature of the agricultural export trade picture is that Canada has been the only one of the four major wheat exporting countries—that is the United States, Australia, Argentina and Canada—to have exports of wheat and flour in the current crop year at a higher level than in the same period a year earlier.

Exports of agricultural products in general this year are running about 12 per cent above those in the corresponding period last year, something which I think is a very encouraging sign indeed as far as the general agricultural picture is concerned in Canada in 1958.

On a regional basis, farm cash income was about the same in 1957 as in 1956 in Ontario, Quebec, Alberta and British Columbia, but lower in all other provinces.

The index of the physical volume of agricultural production—with 1935-39 being taken as 100—dropped to 130.5 from 169.2 the previous year, a very large decline in production. The sharpest declines were in the grain growing provinces. The fact that the decline in cash income was so small indicates better prices for many products. However, when grains and other field crops are taken into consideration, the general index of farm prices was slightly lower, dropping to 209.2 from 213.2.

The farm price situation has improved steadily in late 1957 and 1958, to a considerable extent I think since this government came into office and instituted new policies in connection with agriculture. Preliminary dominion bureau of statistics estimates place the index of farm prices of agricultural products at 240.7 in April compared with 237.1 in March. April is the fifth consecutive month witnessing a rise in the index. In other words, in the past six months the general level of agricultural prices has been upward.

**Mr. Argue:** Will the minister permit a question?

**Mr. Harkness:** Yes.

[Mr. Harkness.]

**Mr. Argue:** Does he happen to have with him cost of production statistics for the same period, or the cost of production index?

**Mr. Harkness:** No; I have not that at the moment.

**Mr. Argue:** Does the minister know whether that index is higher than the index of agricultural prices based on the 1930 average?

**Mr. Harkness:** During the period which I have just outlined, namely the last six months, there has been very little change. I have in my hand a list of selected commodities, which includes most of the main items produced in Canada and which gives the prices for the first week of June, 1957 as compared with the first week of June, 1958. It indicates the situation in general this year as compared with the situation in the first week of June last year so far as farm prices are concerned, as follows: Cattle, good steers at Toronto, in 1957 were selling at \$19.88 per cwt. and in 1958 at \$24 per cwt.; hogs, grade A in Toronto, were \$32.25 in 1957 and \$34.50 in 1958; lambs in Toronto were \$22 in 1957 and \$24 in 1958; creamery butter, Canada first grade, Montreal, was 57 cents as compared with 63 cents; cheddar cheese in Ontario, f.o.b. warehouse, was 34 cents per pound as compared with 35 cents per pound and cheddar cheese in Quebec was 33½ cents per pound as compared with 32½ cents per pound; eggs, grade A large, at grading stations to wholesalers in Montreal, were 40 cents in 1957 as compared with 46 cents in 1958; in Halifax they were 38 cents as compared with 40 cents; in Toronto 36 cents as compared with 44 cents and in Winnipeg 37 cents as compared with 39 cents; turkeys, live No. 1, 10 to 20 pounds, Montreal, were 30 cents to 31 cents per pound in 1957 as compared with 34 to 35 cents per pound in 1958; fowl, live No. 1, 5 pounds and over at Toronto, were 19 to 20 cents per pound as compared with 23 to 24 cents per pound this year; potatoes, Canada No. 1, wholesale New Brunswick at Montreal, 75-pound bag, \$1.65 to \$1.75 in 1957 compared with \$1.40 to \$1.50 in 1958.

I would like the house to note the difference as an indication of the situation in the potato markets. Potatoes No. 1 in Manitoba, at Winnipeg, a 75-pound bag, in 1957 were 70 cents to \$1 while in 1958 they were \$3 to \$3.50. This is one of the products in which we have a great variation from one part of the country to the other and from one market to another.

Wheat, Ontario No. 1, mixed winter wheat at shipping points, \$1.34 per bushel last year compared with \$1.51 per bushel this year; wheat No. 1 Northern, in store Fort William,