

reflects the underlying confidence of the businessman in the future of Canada, and is indicative of the strength and diversity of the expansive forces within the Canadian economy.

"The physical impact of the anticipated investment programme, in terms of its demands upon Canadian industry, will be about the same in 1959 as in the preceding year. Other types of demand, however, will be higher. Consumer purchases are rising. These are indications that inventory liquidation, which exerted a depressive effect on business activity for most of 1958, will soon give way to accumulation. With recovery proceeding steadily in the United States, export prospects are brightening. A sustained demand for capital goods, in conjunction with expanding markets in other fields, gives promise of further growth in production and employment levels in the period ahead."

\* \* \* \*

## AID TO SOUTHEAST ASIA

In the absence of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Donald Fleming, Minister of Finance, made an announcement in the House of Commons on March 12, concerning a Canadian aid programme in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Fleming said:

"For a number of years the United Nations Commission for Asia and the Far East has been conducting a series of investigations and studies of the development possibilities of the lower Mekong River basin. The Mekong is one of the great rivers of the world. Its total length is about 2,600 miles, and its length in the lower basin is 1,600 miles. It actually rises in southern China but for most of its course it flows through or between Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and South Vietnam. The economic health and the political stability and independence of these countries are in large measure related to this great river.

"The development of the lower Mekong offers great economic benefits to the four riparian states and, indeed, to the region as a whole in terms of flood control, irrigation, hydro-electric power and improved navigation. The realization of these benefits, however, is still many years away. Some preliminary planning and survey work has been done but further progress cannot be made without first obtaining more reliable and detailed data on the basin. The development possibilities are so encouraging that the United States, New Zealand, France, Japan and several agencies of the United Nations have already contributed men and resources to carry out these further investigations.

"For our own part, while the bulk of Canada's aid under the Colombo Plan has been and should be concentrated in Commonwealth countries, the Government considered that this project was sufficiently challenging and

promised such great benefits as to warrant some Canadian participation in it. Moreover, the Government was influenced by the fact that these benefits would go in substantial degree to countries with which Canada has been closely associated in recent years through our membership in the International Supervisory Commission in Indochina.

"We therefore made available the services of Lieutenant Colonel G.S. Andrews, Surveyor General of the Department of Lands and Forests of the province of British Columbia, to make a detail study of the problems and estimated costs involved in the aerial surveying and mapping of the Mekong River which, as hon. members will appreciate, is an essential first step toward the eventual realization of the potential benefits of this project.

"On the basis of Colonel Andrews' report, the Canadian Government has now decided to participate in the first priority phase of the survey and mapping of the main stem of the Mekong River. This work, which Canadian companies are particularly well qualified to undertake, is expected to extend over two years and will involve an aggregate Canadian contribution of up to \$1.3 million. It is the intention of the Government to finance this contribution from Colombo Plan funds and which Parliament will be asked to appropriate in 1959-60 and 1960-61".

\* \* \* \*

## FEWER FARMS

The downward trend in the number of farms in Canada, reported for the first time in the 1951 national Census, continued at a quickened pace throughout the 1951-1956 period. With little change in total farm area in the period, there was a further substantial growth in the average size of farm, according to one of a series of analytical reports based on the 1956 Census of Agriculture.

All provinces reported fewer farms in 1956 than in 1951, and the national total fell almost 8 per cent to 575,015 from 623,091 in 1951. Total area of Canadian farms in 1956 was 173,923,691 acres as compared with 174,046,654 in 1951. The Prairie Provinces recorded increases which were more than counterbalanced by decreases in other provinces. Farm land constituted close to 8 per cent of the total Canadian land area in 1956, but if Yukon and the Northwest Territories are excluded, the percentage was 13.

As a result of a larger percentage decrease in the number of farms than in the farm area, the average size of farms in Canada increased more than 8 per cent to 302.5 acres in 1956 from 279.3 in 1951. In 1956 the farms in the Prairie Provinces were, on average, four times the size of Eastern Canadian farms. The average farm size in the Prairie Provinces was 546.1 acres and in the six eastern provinces, 134.1 acres. The number of small farms (under

(Over)