

The Address—Mr. Blackmore

Trends in Britain's Overseas Trade

A survey of Britain's overseas trade*, just published by the United Kingdom Board of Trade shows that while the volume of both imports and exports are increasing, the greater rate of expansion is recorded by exports.

Raw materials have shown the biggest proportional increase for any group in both exports and imports, although on the export side manufactured goods still account for by far the largest share in the increase in values.

Changes in Exports

During the period covered by the survey—the first four months of 1950—exports showed a general rise of 12 per cent in value compared with 1949. Manufactured goods exported increased by 11 per cent, raw materials by 35 per cent and the exports of food, drink and tobacco by 23 per cent.

The largest percentage increase in manufactured goods exported was shown by jewellery, with an 82 per cent rise on 1949. Private cars rose by 58 per cent, plastic materials by 45 per cent, refined petroleum products by 41 per cent and leather goods by 40 per cent.

Among the main groups of manufactured goods exported only three had declined on 1949. They are: cotton goods—down 8 per cent, non-ferrous metals—5 per cent down, and electrical goods—1 per cent down.

Changes in Imports

Imports in the first four months of 1950 showed an average proportional rise of 7 per cent compared with 1949, with manufactured goods up by 4 per cent, raw materials by 15 per cent, and food, drink and tobacco by 3 per cent. The effects of devaluation and of the 25 per cent cut in Britain's purchases from North America were reflected in changes in imports of raw materials. Wood and timber imports declined by 42 per cent, paper-making materials by 19 per cent, and non-ferrous ores by 5 per cent.

The biggest increase in the food import group was 50 per cent for meat, but tobacco imports fell by 35 per cent from £52.5 million in 1949 to an annual rate of £34.2 million this year. On the other hand, tobacco imports from Canada rose sharply from £2 million in 1949 to an annual rate of £6 million this year.

Balance of Trade

Britain's trade with the world during the first quarter of this year has shown a further trend towards balancing. Out of 68 territories listed in the survey, only 9 show an excess of trade with the U.K. greater than £3 million (monthly rate), while 44 show an unbalance of less than £1 million.

Total trade showed an excess of imports over exports equivalent to an annual rate of £280 million. This compares with £429.5 million in 1949, so that the decline of excess of imports on last year is so far approximately 35 per cent.

Trade with Canada

Comparative figures of U.K. exports to Canada, and of overseas trade with Canada, are provided in tables 13, 17, and 19. They show that U.K. exports of vehicles and woollen goods continue to preponderate in trade figures, though Canada's purchases of U.K. machinery show encouraging rises.

*Available from H. M. Stationery Office, London. Price 1s. 0d.

The great Creator has put into the hands of the British commonwealth all the cards with which to win the stupendous game now in progress among men. It is for us, right here in

[Mr. Blackmore.]

this parliament, under divine guidance, to play our cards with wisdom—and likewise to play to win!

Mr. W. Ross Thatcher (Moose Jaw): On October 16 last, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Resources and Development (Mr. Winters) made a statement concerning Canadian housing. I desire to say a few words about his statement, and housing in general. In his report to parliament the minister more or less summed up the activities of his department in this way, as found in *Hansard* at page 79:

... during this very difficult period, the government, by adjusting its policies to meet conditions, has lived up to its obligations, ...

Further along in his speech the minister said: "... a great effort is being made." Certainly, Mr. Speaker, those are the words of a man who is highly contented with the achievements and well satisfied with his departmental accomplishments. But is his satisfaction warranted? Is his contentment justified? I suggest today that it is timely for this parliament to look at the hard facts.

About two years ago Mr. D. B. Mansur, president of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, told us that Canada was short 425,000 houses. I think it is generally admitted by members of all parties that today there are more than 600,000 Canadians who lack adequate housing accommodation. By the end of this year we are going to have a population of 14,500,000; that is, roughly, 400,000 more than we had on January 1. I think that every hon. member realizes quite well that heavier immigration, natural population increase and defence industries have all contributed to creating in Canada a housing problem which has long since reached fairly desperate proportions.

Today we have literally hundreds of thousands of our fellow citizens jammed together in dismal quarters with little or no privacy. Overcrowding, dirt, poor ventilation and bad lighting are breeding disease, mental strain, frayed nerves and broken families. Many young couples in Canada today are unable to have children simply because they dare not under existing housing conditions. Mr. Speaker, I say that the unworthy conditions in which many of our citizens are living should appal every member of this house. I regret to say that the housing situation in Canada has become worse with every successive week that the present minister has headed the department. Yet on October 16 he came to parliament and told us that a great job is being done. Every month thousands of immigrants are being brought to Canada, and I support that policy. But I should like to know this. Where are they going to live?