

end of the war to the 1950's there were too many people producing foodstuffs, because the disappearance of our export markets coincided with the rapid spread and increasingly generalized use of modern agricultural machinery. In other words, the farmers' productivity had greatly increased.

During the last few months, prices seem to have become stabilized. For the first time in about four or five years, domestic consumption has practically absorbed our butter production. And many economists believe that the demand for agricultural products will increase each year by 2 to 3 per cent. Our farmer's productive capacity can easily keep pace with that increase. On the whole, the agricultural picture is improving and there seems no reason to fear the sort of exodus which has been going on over the last ten years. We may even have to import certain products, like beef, for instance. Agriculturists should become increasingly efficient; they should produce more per hour of work.

If in twenty years' time our population is to reach 25 million, our per capita production should increase by about 75 per cent over what it has been these last few years. This means that our farm acreage should increase by about 20 to 25 per cent, our livestock by about 50 per cent and the production capacity of agricultural machinery by about 40 per cent. These figures are based on constant dollars.

I recognize that these are cold figures. They are the result of tabulations prepared by agricultural economists, in particular by Mr. E. C. Hope who submitted them to a meeting of the British Columbia Agricultural Federation, held in November, in Chilliwack. Mr. Hope's figures are very much the same as those reached by our economists working on the same problem. Needless to say they apply to the whole country. Ever since the appointment of a Senate committee has been mentioned, most people seem concerned with the agricultural land of Eastern Canada, located, I believe, in the district which lies between the Appalachians to the south and the Laurentian foot-hills to the north, or in the outskirts of the Canadian shield. I cannot even in a cursory manner, review the conditions existing in certain parts of the province of Ontario or the Maritime provinces. I shall limit myself to the conditions existing in a wide area of the province of Quebec, because I am more familiar with that province and with the agricultural conditions prevailing in some of its parts.

The 1951 census indicates that there are in Quebec, in round figures, 134,000 farms averaging 125 acres each. But 41.9 per cent of these farms are made up of woodlots, tim-

ber lands, marshes or stoney land. The productivity of this farm land is negligible, except in the case of timber land, wood lots and maple bushes. Therefore, this leaves an average of only 72.5 acres, in round figures, from which a reasonable income can be expected.

But the same 1951 census indicates that there were at that time 23,857 farms of less than 70 acres. A 70-acre farm can support its owner if it is intensively cultivated and particularly if it is used to produce fruit, vegetables, etc. But it is dairy farming and its side lines which is the most popular agricultural operation. In order that a farmer and his family may have an average yearly net income of, let us say \$1,800, it takes about 50 head of cattle—and that means 25 to 30 milking cows, the remainder being heifers of two or three years old and calves—and about 150 acres of cultivated land on a well-kept farm. Otherwise, capital investments are not in full use. In 1951, the average Canadian farm was worth \$10,517, distributed as follows: farm buildings and land, \$6,305; machinery and equipment, \$1,678; livestock, \$2,534; that is 61, 16 and 24 per cent respectively of the farm's total value. This is evidently out of proportion. A large part of such investment is only indirectly productive, such as machinery and equipment, buildings, etc. Farm buildings ordinarily represent about \$3,000. Even if the land were considered as directly productive, the total capital investment produces very little because of the reduced acreage under cultivation,—72 or 73 acres,—unless, I repeat, the farmer goes in for extensive livestock or vegetable production. But this rarely happens.

And where do we find these rather poor lands which are better suited to forestry than agriculture? Of ancient geological origin, they are located on rugged terrain; therefore, they suffer from leaching and usually the acid soil requires, to become productive, a great deal of fertilizers and soil amendments. They are found in the foot-hills of the two mountain ranges which cross the province, the Alleghanies to the south and the Laurentians to the north. Operation of these farms raises the greatest problems and calls for the ingenuity and knowledge of the best agriculturists. Because of the restricted area of arable land and poor yields, the owners of these farms can count on very little income and cannot, therefore, enjoy a standard of living comparable to that of a semi-skilled labourer.

Some families, of course, leave excellent farmlands, but most of those who leave the farm come from the poorer districts. A sound agricultural policy should therefore aim at returning to the forest the lands suitable for