

## IMPORTS LAST YEAR

In 1963, for the third year in succession, the value of commodity imports into Canada from all countries showed an increase and, at \$6,558,800,000, set a new record, according to detailed returns released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This total represented an advance of 4.8 per cent from the 1962 figure of \$6,257,800,000, with higher prices of imports accounting for most of the gain, though there was a small rise in volume. Arrivals from all main trading areas were greater in value, with the exception of those from Britain. Final import figures were slightly below the preliminary total released on February 5, so that the revised export-trade surplus for 1963 stands at approximately \$421,300,000.

The average level of import prices in 1963 was nearly 4 per cent above that in the preceding year, while the index of physical volume of imports rose by slightly less than 1 per cent. Approximately four-fifths of the advance in the value of 1963 imports thus appeared owing to increased prices, in Canadian currency, of imported commodities. About one-quarter of this increase in price might be ascribed to the lowered exchange value of the Canadian dollar, which has remained more or less steady since May 1962, when the new par was introduced. The remainder seems to be mainly owing to the rise in price of various imports, particularly agricultural products, such as fresh fruits and sugar.

### MONTHLY INCREASES

During 1963, imports each month were greater in value than in the corresponding month of 1962, with the exceptions of February, March and May. Arrivals in December, at \$556,800,000, were 27.3 per cent above those in the previous December. There were consequently increases in each quarterly period, except the first one. Imports in the fourth quarter of 1963 were valued at \$1,795,100,000, a rise of 15 per cent from those in the same three months of the preceding year, and were the highest ever recorded for any quarter. The index of physical volume of imports was 10.4 per cent above that for the same quarter of 1962, indicating a considerably greater movement of goods, while the price-index increase of 4.2 per cent was approximately the same as the average for the year. Imports from the United States advanced by 12.9 per cent, to \$1,177,800,000, and, for the first time in two years, there was an up-turn in quarterly imports from Britain, which rose 10.4 per cent to \$144,600,000. Arrivals from other Commonwealth and preferential-rate countries increased by almost half to \$128,400,000, principally owing to the added value of sugar imports, and commodities from other countries advanced by 15.1 per cent, to \$344,400,000. In the latter total, more than half the gain was owing to added arrivals from Western Europe and the remainder mainly to increased imports from Asia and South America.

The proportions of imports provided by Canada's chief suppliers in 1963 showed some small variations from those of the previous year. There were declines in the shares sent by the United States, from 68.7 per cent in 1962 to 67.8 per cent in 1963, and by Britain, from 9 per cent to 8 per cent. The ratio from

other Commonwealth and preferential-rate countries rose from 5.1 per cent to 6.2 per cent for 1963 and, for other countries, from 17.2 per cent to 18 per cent. Included in the last figure, Western Europe supplied 7.2 per cent of all imports, South America 4.9 per cent, Central America 1.7 per cent and the Middle East 1.6 per cent, each a fractional gain over the preceding year. Asia's share of 2.2 per cent remained the same in both periods.

### PRINCIPAL IMPORTS

Among the principal imports during 1963, non-farm machinery, at \$675,100,000 remained the leading commodity, valued approximately the same as in 1962. Automobile parts followed and, at \$489,100,000, gained by nearly one-quarter. Crude-petroleum imports rose by nearly 10 per cent, to \$334,800,000, while electrical apparatus dropped 4.3 per cent, to \$311,500,000. Tractors and farm equipment increased substantially, the former advancing by 31 per cent, to \$183,700,000, and the latter by 23.6 per cent, to \$140,200,000. There was a considerable decrease in aircraft and parts, which dropped by nearly 40 per cent, to \$159,900,000, but this comparison was affected in part by the inclusion in 1962 of certain imports under special defence arrangements. Sugar imports in 1963, owing mostly to increased prices, more than doubled at \$127,100,000, while fresh fruits rose 3.2 per cent, to \$102,700,000. Automobiles fell by over a third, to \$116,600,000, though fourth-quarter imports rose sharply. There were sizable increases in the 1963 arrivals of scientific and educational equipment, steel plate, iron ore, engines and tools, and considerable advances in aluminum ores, coal, coffee and fuel oils, while cotton fabrics, raw cotton and apparel declined.

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## ART CONSERVATION LABORATORY

A National Conservation Research Laboratory was inaugurated on April 1 by the National Gallery of Canada. In his announcement of this important development, Dr. Charles F. Comfort, Director of the Gallery, said that the planning of the Laboratory had been going on for some time and that the basic professional staff and facilities required for its operation had already been acquired.

### MAIN ACTIVITIES

The chief project to be undertaken by this new section of the National Gallery is the conservation of the national art collection by the application of the highest international standards. In addition, studies will be carried out on the effect of environment on works of art, the durability of artists' materials and the scientific identification of artistic techniques.

The services of the NCRL, which is the counterpart of laboratories in Paris, London, Rome and Brussels, will be offered to government departments and art museums on a priority basis. They will be extended as more professional and technical staff is acquired over the next four years.

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