

Food Board Orders

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Sixty Food Board Orders had been issued up to August 31st. Taking into consideration the large amount of work involved by the control of foods within so vast a Dominion, this is a very small number of restrictive or definitive orders. Up to April 30th last, over 360 orders had been issued by the British Food Controller, and in the first three months of this year as many as 130 were published by him. It is true that there is a very highly developed individual rationing system in force in Great Britain, making it necessary for everything to be regulated down to the string on the grocery parcel. In Canada, however, the enormous expense of rationing has been avoided by a firm policy of control "from the top." It is worth while noting—and it might be put as an answer to those who without knowledge ask for rationing in Canada—that it required nearly four months to ration Great Britain for sugar alone. Over 15,000,000 instruction cards had to be printed and issued. How many should we require for a rationing scheme in Canada? It has been calculated that the cost of individual rationing in the United States would involve, for bureaucratic expenses only, between \$40,000,000 and \$45,000,000. Canada, on the same footing, would probably need to spend \$8,000,000 to \$12,000,000.

Other means have, therefore, been wisely thought out to attain the end required by our food effort within the Dominion. It has, however, not been the simple task of waving a wand which some good people seem to fancy was the be all and end all of the Food Controller's office. The mere list of the main subjects to which the orders have reference is itself interesting. It includes, of course, all the food trades, such as bakers and confectioners, butchers, fish dealers of all kinds, grocers, millers, flour and feed dealers, fruit and vegetable dealers, cannery, packers and produce merchants; and it runs to all the food-producing and food handling concerns from the farm to the kitchen, and even to the table, for restaurants are included in the activities of the Board.

"Order-in-Council No. 1460, creating the post of Food Controller and defining his duties and powers, is a document of wide scope, which a municipal student could profitably spend half an hour in studying. It is an example of the "much in little" of the good old Latin motto. Section 4 is especially broad in its terms, yet especially definite as to what it excludes. It runs: "All powers conferred and all duties imposed on the Food Controller by these orders or by any subsequent order of the Governor in Council may be exercised and performed by him either independently or in co-operation with any department of the Government of Canada or any Provincial Government, or with any Department or officer of the Government of Great Britain or of any Allied country vested with similar powers." That order was passed on June 16th, 1917, and food measures in the Dominion have gone a long way forward since that first step was taken. On February 11th of this year a change in the designation of the form of authority was made. The name of "Food Controller" was officially discontinued. It was not simply a concession to the popular dislike of anything approaching dictatorship. The adoption of the form "Canada Food Board" was a closer approach to a truer definition of its activities. So long as voluntarism was still the principle upon which food direction had to depend, it was a misnomer to speak of a "Controller." eYt there could be no

escaping the logical force of the first clause of the Order-in-Council which read: "The Board shall generally direct the production, conservation and distribution of food-stuffs in the interests of Canada and of the other British Dominions as well as the Allied nations."

By June 12th, 1918, when Order No. 46 was signed, empowering the Board to take over the direction of many new forms of the food trade, it was felt that food control in the sense necessary to attain that end in Canada had been secured. Practically all the food existent in Canada from that time has been subject to the order of the Food Board. The object aimed at is that this food within the Dominion should go in as direct a line as possible to the consumer; and for the allocation of that which is to go outside the Dominion, that it should go as directly as possible from the farmer-producer to the eastern seaboard with as few handlings as is consistent with efficiency.

So far as home-produced foods are concerned, the future aim of the Board will be towards the use of our own substitutes rather than those imported. To this end, millers are encouraged to grind rye, barley, buckwheat and oats in larger and larger quantities. The importation of rice and corn is being discouraged so far as it can be done without diminishing the supply of our genuine substitutes for wheat flour. No statement of what is being done to supply substitutes should overlook the all-important matter of fish. The Food Board aim is to raise the average consumption in Canada from, roughly, 32 pounds a head a year to 52 pounds. Several orders have been issued on this matter, but they have no feature outstanding which would interest a municipal officer not closely in touch with the fish trade, except, indeed, the general obligation on every citizen to encourage its use.

The most acute, and in some sense, the most difficult problem that has yet cropped up for the Food Board to solve is patent to all, that of the sugar supply. Order No. 60 has restricted the use of sugar to, roughly, 50 per cent. for all manufacturers, and the Board urges every person throughout the Dominion strictly to cut down the supply to 1½ pounds a person a month. Control of the sugar trade has been secured by the issue of certificates to manufacturers. These make a set allowance based upon the average monthly consumption of the applicant in 1917. It is illegal for anyone to supply sugar in bulk to manufacturers without such certificate. In addition, retailers must not sell to manufacturers without the production of a written permit, specially issued from the Canada Food Board. This is a still further step in the system of control now being exercised over our foods. It goes to show that, as it were unconsciously, we have in sugar at least come down to a rationing basis. Even three months ago such a step was not thought within the limits of possibility, but a dozen causes have made it compulsory. How much further it may be necessary to go in order to secure a fair distribution of the supplies of sugar cannot be guessed. So far as can be seen, existing machinery will supply all required. A little reflection on these matters will show with striking clarity that no other form of our war activities in Canada has ever given such ample scope for a study in the "government of the people by the people" as has our method of directing food production and food saving.

A NATIONAL DEBT—(Continued).

The cause of the Fund's inception was to meet a crying need, and prevent the repetition of a national disgrace in the abandonment at death of those who have faithfully served the nation and their fellow citizens, it has of necessity been maintained by public subscription and a system of financial co-operation; but it was specifically agreed at the beginning that it should be maintained as far removed as possible, from the category of "Public Charities" therefore, after Dominion wide propagation of the principle and appeal to the nation to assume its debt, the association has faithfully completed its object, and at least will leave an indelible testimony to its existence in Mount Royal, and Cote des Neiges cemeteries.—Montreal.

(This is the first of five articles on the same subject.)

WHAT WAR GARDENS HAVE PRODUCED.

In response to the call for increased production the people of the cities, towns and villages of Canada have vastly increased the garden acreage in this country. Last year it was estimated by the Agricultural Gazette that the value of the war gardens' produce amounted to somewhere between \$20,000,000 and \$30,000,000. This year Mr. Frederick Abraham, Hon. Chairman of the War Garden and Vacant Lot Section of the Canada Food Board, after a survey of Canada's war garden reports from coast to coast estimates that this year's production will be two or three times greater than last. On this basis the war gardens of Canada this year have produced anywhere from \$40,000,000 to \$90,000,000 worth of fruit and vegetables. Taking a conservative view of these figures, the war garden production in Canada for 1918 should be worth about \$50,000,000.