

FOREIGN TRADE: Canada's total foreign trade in February rose five per cent in value to \$413,100,000 from \$392,500,000 in the corresponding month last year. Imports for consumption were up 13 per cent, while domestic merchandise exports were down by 1.6 per cent. Total for the two months ending February was \$875,900,000 compared with \$837,600,000 in the same period of 1948, the Bureau of Statistics reports.

As a result of the increase in the value of imports and the slight falling-off in exports, Canada's overall favourable balance of trade with all countries in February was down to \$1,200,000 from \$28,100,000 a year ago. For the two months the credit balance was \$16,400,000 compared with \$61,100,000 a year earlier.

The debit balance on the month's trade with the United States was \$40,600,000 -- almost identical with last year's February figure. In January and February this year the unfavourable balance was \$87,900,000 compared with \$83,700,000 last year.

Trade with the United Kingdom in February produced a credit balance of \$21,400,000, down from \$33,900,000 a year ago, while the two-month total was reduced to \$51,900,000 from \$77,300,000.

Imports for consumption from all countries in February were valued at \$206,000,000 as compared with \$182,200,000 a year ago. Domestic exports totalled \$205,000,000 compared with \$208,300,000, and foreign exports \$2,100,000 against \$2,000,000.

MERCHANDISE IMPORTS UP: Canada's merchandise imports in February were valued at \$206,000,000, an increase of 13 per cent over the corresponding month last year. The total was at the highest level on record for February, but at the lowest point since March last year. The trend was generally upwards among the commodity groups, only one of the nine moving to a lower level, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

Imports from the United States were valued at \$148,816,000, up almost nine per cent from last year's total of \$136,847,000, while the value of goods received from the United Kingdom rose slightly more than 28 per cent, from \$17,872,000 to \$22,918,000. Imports from Latin American countries as a group were down to \$13,689,000 from \$14,130,000, due in the main to declines in the value of purchases from Cuba and Mexico.

Imports from Venezuela -- for some time Canada's third largest sources of supply -- were valued at \$6,171,000 compared with \$4,967,000. Purchases from British Malaya had a value of \$3,484,000 compared with \$214,000, Australia \$2,564,000 compared with \$164,000, Brazil \$2,183,000 (\$1,698,000), British Guiana

\$1,031,000 (\$288,000), Mexico \$1,039,000 (\$1,930,000), Colombia \$1,000,000 (\$845,000), Dominican Republic \$1,142,000 (\$458,000), Belgium and Luxembourg \$1,515,000 (\$556,000), and Arabia (\$1,066,000 (nil)).

The iron and its products group -- consistently the largest of the nine -- rose from \$61,000,000 a year ago to \$69,400,000. Rolling mill products, farm implements and machinery, mining and metallurgical machinery, automobiles and parts, showed the larger advances. Household and other non-farm machinery were lower in value.

The non-metallic minerals group fell from \$36,100,000 last year to \$33,700,000, sharp declines in coal and coal products outweighing advances in crude petroleum and most other commodities. There was a gain from \$10,070,000 to \$14,262,000 in the non-ferrous metals group, mainly resulting from marked increases in the imports of brass and copper products, tin and precious metals except gold.

The textiles group moved up sharply from \$22,253,000 a year ago to \$30,219,000, with marked increases in raw cotton and cotton products, wool products, artificial silk and products, and miscellaneous textiles. Imports of flax, hemp and jute were much lower, and raw and unmanufactured wool imports were down moderately.

The agricultural group of imports rose from \$22,678,000 to \$25,431,000. The trend was mixed among the commodities, with gains in fruits, vegetables, sugar, alcoholic beverages, vegetable oils and rubber, and declines in grains and products, cocoa and chocolate, tea, and coffee.

The animals and animal products group rose from \$7,118,000 to \$7,359,000; wood, wood products and paper from \$5,794,000 to \$6,493,000; chemicals and allied products from \$8,536,000 to \$9,623,000; and miscellaneous commodities from \$8,594,000 to \$9,534,000.

BORDER TRAFFIC: Highway traffic between Canada and the United States in February was 14 per cent greater in volume than in the same month last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics. The advance was principally due to Canadian traffic returning from the United States which increased by 32 per cent, while United States traffic entering Canada was only eight per cent higher.

The aggregate number of border crossings was 419,900, consisting of 289,900 foreign entries and 130,000 Canadian vehicles returning. Of the foreign inflow, 35,800 vehicles entered on traveller's vehicle permits, 239,200 were non-permit or local entries and 14,900 were commercial vehicles. The Canadian traffic comprised 6,200 units remaining abroad for more than 24 hours, 109,300 staying for shorter periods and 14,500 commercial vehicles.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR: The number of firms that will be represented at the 1949 Trade Fair in the Machinery, Engineering and Plant Equipment trade group has been given a sharp boost with the reservation of space by Engineering Industries Association representing 1,200 firms from the London region of England.

The firms are manufacturers of light and medium engineering products, tools and instruments. In addition to offering their products for sale at the Trade Fair, the association will investigate Canadian market requirements, price competition, suitability of their goods and report their findings to their member firms.

Machinery and plant equipment firms from nine countries have reserved space at this time with this latest English entry placing that country at the top in number of firms represented.

Reservation of space in the Jewellery section of the 1949 Canadian International Trade Fair by an Australian opal cutting and distributing company for the first time adds interest to this trade classification.

Known as a precious stone which defies imitation, the opals to be displayed at this year's Trade Fair include, the Harlequin, black opal, the Firefly and Jupiter, as well as white opals from the White Cliff opal fields of New South Wales.

The collection consists of 300 specimens in all sizes and shapes. Although the firm says the opal fields of Australia are approaching exhaustion they have accumulated a substantial stock of the precious gems for the Canadian and United States markets.

ICAO CONFERENCE ADVISOR: Lieutenant Commander (P) John N. Donaldson, R.C.N. of Toronto and Ottawa, has been appointed naval advisor to Mr. C.S. Booth, head of the Canadian delegation attending the International Civil Aviation Organization conference in London beginning April 20, it was announced at Naval Headquarters on April 19. The 30-year-old naval pilot is at present serving as Naval Assistant (Air) on the staff of the Senior Canadian Naval Officer in London.

Assisting Lieut.-Cdr. Donaldson at the conference will be Lieut. Wylie C. Spicer, R.C.N., 29, of Chatham, N.B., who is at present serving as staff officer torpedo and anti-submarine to the Senior Canadian Naval Officer in London.

NAVAL CHIEF TO U.K.: Vice-Admiral Harold T.W. Grant, C.B.E., D.S.O., R.C.N., Chief of the Naval Staff, left Ottawa on April 12 for the United Kingdom. While overseas, Vice-Admiral Grant will attend, in company with high-ranking officers of the Royal Navy, an Exercise to be carried out at the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, and will confer with the Admiralty on Naval matters generally.

LABOUR INCOME: Canadian labour income in January is estimated at \$608,000,000, showing a decline of \$10,000,000 from the December figure, but a rise of \$63,000,000 or 11 per cent over January last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

In almost all industries, labour income for the month was lower than in December. The primary extractive industries, together with construction, which are greatly curtailed by winter weather conditions, showed the largest decreases. Indexes of industrial employment and production both declined in January.

According to the Department of Labour, there were only 9,700 working days lost in January through strikes and lockouts as compared with 18,939 in December. There was a slight gain in average weekly earnings in the nine leading non-agricultural industries, and the cost-of-living index dropped one-tenth of a point from 159.6 on January 3 to 159.5 on February 1.

These factors, however, were over-balanced by the drop in employment, bringing about a moderate downward movement in the total purchasing power of the Canadian labour force.

FARM PRICES: Continuing the general downward trend in evidence since the August peak -- interrupted only in December -- the index number of farm prices of agricultural products fell off 4.7 points between January and February to reach the lowest point since May last year. The decline from the January level was attributable to lower prices for grains other than wheat, livestock, poultry and eggs.

According to the Bureau of Statistics the index for February, on the base 1935-39=100, stood at 252.5, down from the January figure of 257.2, but up from the February, 1948 standing of 240.3. The February index compares with the higher figure of 264.1 for August, and 247.5 for May last.

MAN-HOURS AND EARNINGS: Average weekly wages of hourly-rated personnel employed by leading Canadian manufacturers at February 1 amounted to \$41.70, showing an increase of \$2.24 over the average for the holiday week of January 1, and \$4.64 higher than in the corresponding week last year, according to the Bureau of Statistics.

The wage-earners for whom statistics are available worked an average of 42.9 hours in the week of February 1, or 2.3 hours more than in the week of January 1, and 0.1 hours more than in the same week last year. The aggregate hours worked by these hourly-rated wage-earners increased 5.4 per cent in the week as compared with January, but the number of wage-earners dropped by 0.3 per cent.

The average hourly earnings remained steady at 97.2 cents, the first time in a year that the movement has not been upward. At February 1 last year the hourly earnings had also maintained the January 1 level of 86.6 cents.