

International Wheat Agreement

imports of food, particularly from the dollar area. Dr. Hill then went on to analyse supply prospects for the various foods still rationed.

Sugar: Sugar is still rationed to 10 ounces each week for each ration book. It is estimated that to deration sugar an additional half million tons a year would be required which can only be obtained from the dollar area at a cost of about \$40 million a year.

All candy has now been derationed.

Cheese: The weekly ration is now $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces, with a special allowance of 12 ounces for agricultural and certain other workers in places where there are no catering facilities. The abnormally low level of the ration is due to Britain's inability to spend dollars on cheese from Canada and the United States.

The recently announced purchase from Canada of about 5 million pounds—

The word here is "tons", but I think that is an error.

—of cheddar will average about 1.6 ounces per head of the population. The cost, \$1½ million, has been found only because of unexpected dollar payments by Canada to the United Kingdom under the tripartite Canada-United Kingdom-New Zealand meat agreement.

In the absence of a major improvement in sterling area dollar resources there seems little hope of an improvement in the cheese ration.

Bacon and Ham: From January 25 the bacon ration was reduced from 5 to 4 ounces a week, but the minister hopes to put it back to 5 ounces after about a month.

May I interrupt to ask those who will read this information the following question: Can you conceive of people living under conditions like that, every day, when most people in Canada are able to get all they require of these various commodities? Then to continue:

The U.K. market absorbs about 20 per cent of total world exports of bacon and ham and before the war people in Britain ate 600,000 tons, of which about one-third was home produced. Excluding canned ham, total supplies of bacon and ham in 1952 amounted to 534,000 long tons as compared with 561,000 pre-war. Of the 534,000 tons imports accounted for 249,000 as against 383,000 before the war, and home production for 285,000—an increase of 107,000 tons on the pre-war figure and 170,000 tons over that for 1948. So there has been a remarkable advance in home production which now provides more than half of all U.K. needs compared with about one-third pre-war.

I shall skip the remainder about bacon and ham, and proceed to what the document has to say about the supply of some other commodities:

Butter: The present butter ration in Britain is 2 ounces a week and—given the existing dollar shortage—it seems unlikely that any increase can be expected. Both the milk-drinking campaign and the drive for meat production have affected butter production in the United Kingdom; in Australia there has been a disastrous fall in production because of weather conditions; and in Denmark, since 1951, there has been a tendency to divert milk to other forms of manufacture and recent outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease have also affected butter supplies.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

It takes 20 pints of milk to make a pound of butter and the people of Britain are drinking 60 per cent more per head of liquid milk than before the war.

Fats: The present margarine and cooking fat rations are 4 ounces and 2 ounces a week respectively. The fat ration is always linked with the butter ration and adjustments are made between them so that the total fat allocation of all kinds is reasonably constant. People are allowed to take margarine in place of all, or part of, the butter ration.

To deration margarine and cooking fat would need about 225,000 tons of additional material costing about £20 million, of which £10 million would be in dollars and the rest in other non-sterling currencies.

Eggs: The government announced on November 26, 1952, that egg rationing would cease this spring and the subsidy on eggs would be abolished. The U.K. ministry of food are at present working out plans to free egg trading and to ensure orderly marketing, but have not yet announced their proposals. People in Britain get between 1 and 2 eggs a week at present, but there is a substantial black market through which eggs are bought direct from producers at above the subsidized controlled price. The government hope that decontrol will wipe out the black market and also ensure a fairer distribution.

Meat: The meat ration was increased on January 25 from 1s. 8d. to 1s. 9d. a week on the successful conclusion of the Anglo-Argentinian trade agreement. The meat ration has always been fixed by value rather than weight in order to allow of a reasonable consumer choice of the various cuts, but an average figure by weight of the ration is in the order of 8 ounces for each person each week.

Meat is bought mainly from New Zealand, Australia, the Argentine and the Republic of Ireland under long term agreements. Britain hopes to receive much more meat from Australia in 1953 (an estimated 140,000 tons) and this year, for the first time since the war, home production of meat should be almost up to the 1938 level at an estimated 1,020,000 tons. From New Zealand it is hoped to get 360,000 tons. Total estimated supplies from all sources of 1,800,000 tons compared favourably with the 1952 figure of 1,555,000 tons, but is still well below pre-war average figures.

Under the recent Anglo-Argentinian agreement 238,000 long tons of carcass meat and offal will be supplied this year—an improvement on 1952 imports from the Argentine.

Derationing of meat in Britain would seem to be some way off yet, but the ministry of food have freed, so far as possible, cooked meat products. Manufacture and sale of all meat products, except uncooked beef and pork sausages and canned corned meat, were decontrolled last month. Manufacture of sausages and sausage meat is strictly controlled.

It has been my experience in going around among people that the crassest ignorance prevails about Great Britain's position, and what put her there. Outside the house we find that people are utterly bewildered. They are more inclined to think of the Great Britain they read about in history, the Great Britain that until 1914 was all-powerful, and could convert currencies so that nations were enabled to have three-way, four-way or five-way trade deals. People continue to think of Britain as she used to be before 1914; and they think if she does not do what she did then, something ornery is happening