

Natural Resources and Industries

SINCE the earliest days of settlement, Newfoundland's economy has depended on the production of primary products for export. Until almost the end of the 19th century, virtually the sole export industry was the fisheries; as late as 1890 about 90 p.c. of exports consisted of fish and fish products. In the past half-century the economy has become more diversified with the development of mining, the pulp and paper industry and some local manufacturing. But Newfoundland is still basically an area of primary production, with three industries—fisheries, pulp and paper and mining—producing almost exclusively for export, and a fourth—agriculture—for local consumption. Manufacturing (other than pulp and paper) and service industries are concerned almost entirely with the needs of the home market.

★ Fisheries

From the standpoint of the number of people directly employed and those indirectly affected, fishing has always been and still is the most important industry. The Census of 1945 estimated that the fisheries employed over 31,000 men, or about 33 p.c. of the total gainfully occupied males. Employment in the fisheries is distributed almost all around the coast. The fisheries, moreover, is still a major export industry, vying with pulp and paper for the lead in export value.

A wide variety of fishes is found in abundance at the appropriate season close in shore, and throughout the entire year on the Banks which lie off shore for the most part south and east of the Avalon Peninsula. Cod has always predominated. Dried and salted cod has been the staple of the industry and still accounts for over half the total fish exports, though in recent years fresh-fish products have increased.

The relative importance of the various kinds of fish is shown by fisheries exports. Of the total fish and fish products exported (see p. 117) in the year ended Mar. 31, 1948, salted codfish made up 58.0 p.c., fish oils and meals 16.1 p.c., herring 7.5 p.c., fresh codfish 5.9 p.c., lobster 2.9 p.c., salmon 2.7 p.c. and other 6.9 p.c.

The Cod Fishery.—There are three branches of the cod fishery—the inshore, the 'Bank' or deep-sea and the Labrador fishery. The first of these is by far the largest and occupies the greatest number of fishermen. It is carried on along most of the coast line