

RESERVES OF U.S. DOLLARS \$1,117,000,000

BEST SINCE 1947: The Minister of Finance, Mr. Abbott, announced on January 6 that Canada's reserves of gold and U.S. dollars were 1,117 million on December 31, 1949.

The comparable figure for September 30, 1949 was \$985 million; for October 31, 1949, \$1,007 million; and for November 30, 1949, \$1,068 million. At the end of 1948 the figure was \$998 million. All these figures are in terms of U.S. dollars.

Mr. Abbott explained that figures of Canada's gold and dollar reserves do not include U.S. dollars borrowed by the Government of Canada in the United States in August, 1949 and used (on October 1, 1949 and November 1, 1949) or set aside to be used (on February 1, 1950) for the retirement of security issues guaranteed by the Government of Canada and payable at the holder's option in U.S. dollars.

Mr. Abbott attached to his statement a table showing the amount of Canada's reserves of

gold and U.S. dollars at the end of each month during the past year. This table which follows shows the fluctuations upwards and downwards in Canada's reserves from month to month.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total official holdings of gold and U.S. dollars</u>
Dec. 31, 1948	\$ 998. million
Jan. 31, 1949	1022. million
Feb. 28, 1949	1044. million
Mar. 31, 1949	1067. million
Apr. 30, 1949	991. million
May 31, 1949	977. million
June 30, 1949	977. million
July 31, 1949	973. million
Aug. 31, 1949	987. million
Sept. 30, 1949	985. million
Oct. 31, 1949	1007. million
Nov. 30, 1949	1068. million
Dec. 31, 1949	1117. million

EMPLOYMENT AT RECORD: The Minister of Labour, Mr. Mitchell, released on January 6, the following statistics in respect to Employment and Unemployment in Canada.

The total labour force in December was estimated at 5,200,000 persons. This figure, of course, is less than was the case when students were available earlier in the year and normally a large number of women do not wish to work in the winter. This figure of 5,200,000 is the highest figure for December in the history of Canada despite the fact that it is approximately 150,000 lower than was the case in September 1949.

Of the 5,200,000 there were 261,100 unplaced applicants registered in the National Employment Offices across Canada.

Of this number 71.1% were either in receipt of unemployment insurance benefits or were persons whose claims were being processed.

The Minister pointed out that persons actually working represented by the total labour force less the unplaced applicants - just under five million - was the highest number of employed persons for December in the history of Canada.

MOTOR VEHICLE SHIPMENTS: Falling sharply from the high levels of the two preceding months, factory shipments of Canadian-made motor vehicles in November reached the lowest monthly total since February last. The month's total was down 43 per cent from October and was also 36 per cent below November, 1948. Despite the pronounced decrease from a year earlier the cumulative total for the first 11 months of 1949 was 12 per cent higher than in the same period of 1948.

In November, 19,721 units were shipped as

compared with 28,125 in the preceding month and 26,794 a year ago. The cumulative total for the 11 months ending November increased to 264,713 units from 236,873 in the like period of 1948. Shipments in February last year aggregated 17,197 units.

WHEAT STOCKS: Stocks of Canadian wheat in store or in transit in North America at midnight on December 22 amounted to 165,310,900 bushels compared with 165,932,200 on December 15 and 172,294,000 on the corresponding date last year.

Overseas export clearances of wheat during the week ending December 22 totalled 2,964,700 bushels compared with 3,704,700 in the same week last year, and in the cumulative period, 78,484,100 bushels compared with 54,944,500.

LIVING COSTS DECLINE: The Bureau of Statistics cost-of-living index declined from 161.7 at November first to 161.5 at December first. This marked the fourth consecutive fractional decline from the August peak of 162.8, and placed the index 2.6 points above December 1, 1948. From August 1939 to December 1949 the increase in the cost-of-living index was 60.2 per cent.

The decline between November 1 and December 1 was almost entirely due to the food index which dropped from 203.3 to 201.9. Sharply lower prices for eggs and slight decreases in meats overbalanced considerably higher quotations for coffee. Home furnishings and services registered the only other decrease, moving from 167.4 to 167.1, while the clothing index remained unchanged at 183.7