

Agricultural Legislation of 1906-'07 at Ottawa.

While practically all of the legislation that has been put through by the Dominion Government during the session that has been in progress during the past five months has more or less interest to the agriculturist, in common with other classes of the community, three of the measures that have been enacted have a direct bearing upon agriculture. These are the "Cold-storage" Act, the "Meat and Canned Foods" Act, and the "Customs Tariff Revision of 1907."

THE COLD-STORAGE ACT is in accordance with the policy of the Minister of Agriculture, formulated some years ago, for the purpose of aiding the export trade in perishable food products. Commencing with the assistance to steamship companies towards the installation of cold chambers for the carrying of fruit, dairy products, etc., the work was extended to the provision of an iced-car service during the heated months for butter, then for cheese; the construction and operation of illustration cooling rooms, and the bonusing of cheese and butter factories for the construction of refrigerators according to plans recommended by the Department. This still left the weak link of a lack of cold-storage facilities for the cooling and holding of such products as fruits, dressed poultry, etc., until these could be forwarded to the market by cool cars and steamships.

This bill provides for the granting of subsidies to persons who may enter into contracts with the Governor-in-Council for the construction, equipment and maintenance in good and efficient working order, of public cold-storage warehouses equipped with mechanical refrigeration, in Canada, and suitable for the preservation of all food products.

Upon the approval of the Governor-in-Council of the details of plans, specifications, location and amount to be expended upon every such warehouse, the Minister of Agriculture grants towards the construction and equipment of such warehouse a subsidy of thirty per cent. of the cost thereof in five installments, as follows: 15 per cent. upon the completion of the cold storage and its satisfactory operation; 7 per cent. at the end of the first year following; 4 per cent. at the end of the second year; and 2 per cent. at the end of each of the two next succeeding years; provided the warehouse is maintained and operated to the satisfaction of the Minister of Agriculture.

THE MEAT AND CANNED-FOOD ACT is a measure that should very materially assist the export trade in meats, vegetables, fruits and fish. Its purpose is to safeguard the trade in these products from charges of unwholesomeness, and in this way establish the same measure of confidence for these foods as already exists in Canadian cheese and butter. A meat inspection measure has been recommended by the Veterinary Director-General for two or three years, but not until the effect of the revelations of conditions at Chicago packing-houses became apparent did such legislation appear necessary in Canada. The publicity given the findings of the inspection commission appointed from Washington, gave all canned goods and products of meat-packing plants a name so bad in the minds of consumers wherever American foods reached, that the sale for them fell off greatly in all the leading markets of the world. To insure confidence in Canadian dressed, cured and canned meats, etc., the new measure was enacted.

To the great satisfaction of the Government, an inspection of all the meat-packing plants in Canada, preparing food for either export or interprovincial trade, by an official of the Department of Agriculture, revealed a generally satisfactory condition. The plants themselves, and the manner in which they were found to be operated, were calculated to turn out wholesome food in attractive form. It was to insure a continuation of this condition, and to have the products of Canadian factories marketed bearing the seal of Governmental inspection that the meats and canned-food act was introduced and made law by the Parliament of Canada.

There are two main divisions to the bill. The provisions in regard to meats, including dressed carcasses, cured bacon, hams, dressed poultry, sausages, and all canned or bottled meat products are a little more drastic than the provisions which apply to fruits, vegetables and fish. In plants where the former are prepared, one or two duly qualified Government inspectors are to be constantly employed, to inspect the animals alive and again after slaughter, and the parts thereof in the course of curing or canning. That found healthy and fit for food shall be duly marked by the inspector, which mark it is intended shall constitute a guarantee that the product is above suspicion. Provision is made for re-inspection before shipment, if considered necessary, with a view to determining whether the product has undergone deterioration since the first inspection.

Carcasses or portions thereof considered unhealthful or unfit for food, or which contain such ingredients or preservatives as may render them unfit for food, shall be marked by the inspector in such a manner as to indicate their condition, when it shall be disposed of as regulations provide.

In the case of fruits, vegetables and fish, the bill provides for sufficiently frequent and thorough inspection of packing plants to ascertain whether these are kept in a sanitary state, and whether the products prepared and packed for export are sound, wholesome and fit for food. Factories conducted in accordance with

regulations shall be granted permission to use such marks as will indicate that their products are sound and good. A plant that is not so conducted may be closed and its packed goods confiscated. All unsound or unwholesome products discovered in packing plants by inspectors shall be confiscated or destroyed.

Penalties ranging up to five hundred dollars are provided for false marking, tampering with marks, obstructing inspectors, and other violations of the Act. The Governor-in-Council may suspend the operations of any sections of the Act until the beginning of the year 1908.

The industry to be safeguarded by this Act is now worth about twenty millions of dollars annually for export alone, while the interprovincial trade in these products is enormous. It is calculated that some \$60,000 will be required to carry out this inspection the first year. This will include the salaries and expenses of from 35 to 40 inspectors, in addition to the bonus of \$100 granted to each candidate who chose to prepare himself for inspection work by taking a special course in meat inspection at Chicago. At the present time there are in Canada from 15 to 20 meat-packing plants that will require constant inspection, and from 60 to 70 canneries that will need occasional supervisory inspection.

THE TARIFF CHANGES.

The Customs Tariff Act of 1907 differs from tariff measures previously enacted by the Parliament of Canada. Heretofore one specified general tariff was provided for, while the Act of 1907 makes provision for three separate specific tariffs, viz.: British Preferential, Intermediate and General.

The British Preferential Tariff applies to goods produced or manufactured in the following British countries when imported direct to a Canadian port: The United Kingdom, Bermuda, British West Indies, British Guinea, British India, Ceylon, Straits Settlements, New Zealand, Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange River Colony, Transvaal, and Southern Rhodesia. Any other British Colony may be admitted to this preference by an order-in-council, and the preference may be withdrawn by the same procedure from and after, in either case, the publication of the order-in-council in the Canadian Gazette.

In the old tariff of 1897, which remained in operation until the present one came into force in November, 1906, the British Preference amounted to a reduction of 25 per cent. of the general tariff on all British goods, with the exception of certain spirituous liquors, medicines, tobaccos, etc. This preference, by the Act of 1907, is set at a fixed amount or percentage for each article specified.

The Intermediate Tariff shall apply to goods the produce or manufacture of any British or foreign country, to which the benefits of it shall have been extended to that country by the Governor-in-Council, in consideration of favors granted the products of Canada. By this process articles shall be transferred from the general to the intermediate classification. This transfer shall have effect simultaneously with the publication of the order-in-council in the Canadian Gazette. Provision is made for the withdrawal of this benefit at the discretion of the Governor-in-Council.

This intermediate tariff has not yet been put into operation with any country. It is purely a provision for a reciprocal arrangement that may be entered into between the Governor-in-Council and a country seeking better terms than the general tariff affords.

In order to guard against the effects of undervaluation of imports, provision is made in the Tariff Act for levying a special duty ("Dumping Duty") on such articles equal to the difference between the said selling price for the article for export and a fair market value for home consumption. This special duty is limited to fifteen per cent., ad valorem. Exempted goods under this provision include sugar refined in the United Kingdom, and binder twine made from certain grasses or fibres and measuring not exceeding 600 feet to the pound.

Again, a surtax is provided to apply to the goods of any foreign country which treats imports from Canada less favorably than these from other countries. The amount of the surtax when imposed shall be one-third of the duty specified in the general tariff. This is a continuation of the amendment to the customs tariff, assented to in October, 1903.

Articles for which changes in the general customs tariff have been effected by the Tariff Act of 1907:

Article.	1904-1905		1907	
	General	General	Inter-	British
	Tariff.	Tariff.	mediate	prefer-
	Tariff.	Tariff.	Tariff.	ential
Live Stock and Live-stock Products—				
Cattle (unregistered).....	20%	25%	22½%	15%
Horses (unregistered).....	20%			
Horses (unregistered) over 1 yr. old, valued at \$50 or less per head each....		\$12.50	\$12.50	\$10.00
Sheep (unregistered).....	20%	25%	22½%	15%
Canned meats, poultry and game.....	25%	27½%	25%	17½%
Extracts of meats and fluid beef not medicated, and soups.....	25%	27½%		17½%
Meats, fresh, n.o.p.....	35%	30%		20%

Field and Orchard Products—

Barley.....	30%	15c.	12½c.	10c.
Beans, per bush.....	15c.	25c.	22½c.	15c.
Buckwheat, per bush.....	10c.	15c.	12½c.	10c.
Peas, n.e.s., per bush.....	10c.	15c.	12½c.	10c.
Bran, millfeed.....	20%			
Oatmeal, lbs.....	20%	60c.	50c.	40c.
per 100 lbs.				
Hops, per lb.....	7c.	6c.	6c.	4c.
Bulbous roots, n.o.p.....	20%	25%	22½%	15%
Plums, bush.....	25%	30c.	20c.	20c.
Quinces.....	25%	50c.	45c.	35c.
Potatoes, n.o.p.....	15c.	20c.	17½c.	12½c.
Melons.....	25%	3c.	2½c.	2c.
each.				
Tomatoes, bush.....	20c.	30%	27½%	20%
10%				

Agricultural Implements, Appliances, etc.—

Harvesters, self-binding.....	20%	17½%	17½%	12½%
Lawn mowers.....	35%	32½%	30%	20%
Mowing machines.....	20%	17½%	17½%	12½%
Rakes, hay, n.e.s.....	25%	22½%	20%	15%
Reapers.....	20%	17½%	17½%	12½%
Spades and shovels, spade and shovel blanks, and iron or steel cut to shape for same.....	35%	32½%	30%	20%
Windmills.....	25%	20%	17½%	12½%
Horse-powers, portable engines, threshers, separators, and finished parts thereof for repairs.....	25%	20%	17½%	15%
Stoves of all kinds, and parts thereof.....	25%	10%	7½%	5%

Following is a complete statistical classification of imports relating to agriculture, together with the rates of duty under the three tariffs, as provided in the Customs Tariff Act now in force:

	British		
	Prefer-	Inter-	General
	ential	mediate	Tariff.
	Tariff.	Tariff.	Tariff.
Animals, Agricultural Products and Provisions—			
Horses, cattle, sheep, goats, asses, swine, dogs and domestic fowls for the improvement of stock, under regulations prescribed by the Governor-in-Council.....	Free	Free	Free
Bees.....	Free	Free	Free
Horses over one year old, valued at \$50 or less per head each....	\$10	\$12.50	\$12.50
Animals living, n.o.p.....	15%	22½%	25%
Meats, fresh, n.o.p.....	2c.	2½c.	3c.
Canned meats, canned poultry and game; extracts of meats and fluid beef not medicated, and soups of all kinds.....	17½%	25%	27½%
Poultry and game, n.o.p.....	12½%	17½%	20%
Meats, n.o.p., per lb.....	1½c.	1½c.	2c.
Provided that the weight of a barrel of pork for duty purposes shall not be less than two hundred pounds.			
Lard, lard compound and similar substances, cottonole and animal stearine of all kinds, n.o.p.; per pound.....	1½c.	1½c.	2c.
Eggs, per dozen.....	2c.	2½c.	3c.
Cheese, per pound.....	2c.	3c.	3c.
Butter, per pound.....	3c.	4c.	4c.
Hops, per pound.....	4c.	6c.	7c.
Beans, n.o.p., per bushel.....	15c.	22½c.	25c.
Peas, n.o.p., per bushel.....	10c.	12½c.	15c.
Buckwheat, per bushel.....	10c.	12½c.	15c.
Buckwheat meal or flour, per 100 lbs.....	35c.	45c.	50c.
Barley, n.o.p., per bushel.....	10c.	12½c.	15c.
Corn meal, per barrel.....	20c.	22½c.	25c.
Indian corn for purposes of distillation, subject to regulations to be approved by the Governor-in-Council, per bush.....	7½c.	7½c.	7½c.
Indian corn, not for purposes of distillation, and under regulations prescribed by the Minister of Customs.....	Free	Free	Free
Oats, per bushel.....	7c.	9c.	10c.
Oatmeal and rolled oats, per 100 lbs.....	40c.	50c.	60c.
Rye, per bushel.....	7c.	9c.	10c.
Rye flour, per barrel.....	33c.	45c.	50c.
Wheat, per bushel.....	8c.	10c.	12c.
Wheat flour, per barrel.....	40c.	50c.	60c.
Hay and straw, per ton.....	\$1.65	\$1.75	\$2.00
Flaxseed, per bushel.....	7½c.	10c.	10c.
Seeds of timothy and clover.....	5%	10%	10%
Field and garden seeds, not specified as free, valued at not less than \$5 per lb., in packages weighing not less than 1 ounce each.....			
Garden, field and other seeds for agr. or other purposes, n.o.p.; sunflower, canary, hemp and millet seed, when in packages weighing over 1 lb. each.....	5%	10%	10%