

SMALL EXPORT SURPLUS: Canada's commodity export trade during September was down slightly more than 2% in value from September last year, while the value of commodity imports declined over 9%, according to preliminary figures released by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. The result was a small overall export surplus, the second this year.

Total exports in September amounted to \$336,700,000 as compared to \$343,800,000 last year. Shipments in the month were higher to the United Kingdom, but lower to other Commonwealth countries, the United States and other foreign countries taken together. Commodity imports declined more substantially to an estimated \$333,000,000 from \$367,500,000, with decreases from the United Kingdom and the United States but increases from other Commonwealth and foreign countries. The small credit balance of \$3,700,000 compares with an import surplus of \$23,600,000 last year.

In the nine months ending September, exports this year aggregated \$2,864,500,000, down 7.8% from \$3,108,700,000 last year, and imports declined 8.2% to an estimated \$3,059,600,000 from \$3,334,700,000. The cumulative import surplus thus fell to \$195,100,000 from \$226,100,000.

SHIPMENTS TO U. S.

September shipments to the United States fell moderately to \$203,900,000 as against \$211,400,000 a year ago, while purchases from the United States dropped to an estimated \$235,100,000 from \$268,000,000, producing a reduced import surplus of \$31,200,000 compared to \$56,600,000. In the January-September period, aggregate exports were down \$94,000,000 to \$1,739,600,000 from \$1,833,600,000, while aggregate imports fell \$254,300,000 to an estimated \$2,217,400,000 from \$2,471,700,000, the cumulative import surplus declining to \$477,800,000 as against \$638,100,000 last year.

Total commodity exports to the United Kingdom climbed in September to \$60,900,000 compared to \$45,100,000 a year ago, but imports from the United Kingdom eased down to \$30,400,000 compared to \$34,300,000, the export surplus rising to \$30,500,000 against \$10,700,000. In the nine months, exports were down to \$462,600,000 from \$509,300,000, and imports somewhat less to an estimated \$300,700,000 from \$339,400,000, the result being an export surplus of \$161,900,000 as against \$169,900,000 last year.

September exports to other Commonwealth countries dropped sharply to \$13,400,000 compared to \$24,900,000 last year, making a reduced nine-month total of \$143,200,000 against \$186,900,000. Estimated imports in the month were up to \$18,900,000 from \$16,900,000, the January-September total being also higher at \$134,800,000 against \$125,900,000.

Exports to all foreign countries other than the United States declined in September to \$58,500,000 compared to \$62,400,000, and in the nine months were down to \$519,100,000 compared to \$578,900,000. Estimated imports, on the other hand, were practically unchanged in September at \$48,600,000 (\$48,300,000 last year) and in the nine months amounted to \$406,700,000 against \$397,700,000.

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WORKERS' BETTERMENT: More than half the plant employees in Canadian manufacturing were on a 40-hour work-week; as of April 1954, according to the results of a survey, released Oct. 28 by Hon. Milton F. Gregg, Minister of Labour. The survey conducted by the Economics and Research Branch of the Department of Labour showed that approximately 53 per cent of the plant workers covered in the survey were on a standard 40-hour week, compared with 43 per cent a year earlier. There was a rise from 79 to 83 per cent in the proportion of plant workers on a five-day week.

Over 90 per cent of the employees could receive annual two-week paid vacations, provided they had worked for the same employer long enough to qualify. The trend is for two-week vacations to be granted after fewer years of service than formerly. In 1950 about one-third of the plant employees covered by the survey were in plants where they could become eligible for such vacations after 3 years of service or less. By April 1954, more than half the employees could become eligible after service of three years or less.

The practice of granting three-week vacations also widened in scope. Fifty-four per cent of the employees were in plants where they could become eligible for vacations of this length. The service requirement for two-thirds of these eligible workers was 15 years. In 1950 fewer than forty per cent of the workers were in plants granting three-week vacations, and the service requirement was more likely to be 20 or 25 years.

The survey dealt for the first time with year-end Christmas bonuses. It was found that 22 per cent of the workers were in plants where bonuses were customarily extended.

This annual survey of working conditions covered more than 800,000 plant workers in about 6,500 manufacturing establishments, which represented about two-thirds of the total workers employed in manufacturing.

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The average work week in manufacturing has been trimmed almost 14% since 1935, while average hourly earnings have been raised more than 3½ times and average weekly wages over 3 times.

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There were 433 airports in operation in Canada at the close of last year, 18 more than at the end of 1952.