

Subsidies are also paid on fluid milk for human consumption where necessary to ensure an adequate supply. In the fishing industry the construction of certain types of fishing vessels was subsidized to offset the effect of the diversions made of these craft to the navy.

Consumer Rationing

Consumer rationing was necessary in order to ensure equitable distribution of certain basic foods within Canada. It was also essential in order to meet commitments to the United Kingdom and the needs of the armed forces. The Wartime Prices and Trade Board was made responsible for rationing of food and for holding down consumer prices.

Such commodities as sugar, tea, coffee and butter were rationed in 1942. The next year meat and preserves were added to the ration list, and a priority plan was adopted which, by the use of ration coupons, enabled the consumption of evaporated milk to be restricted to essential users. Tea and coffee were taken off the ration list in September, 1944. Rationing of meat was temporarily suspended at the end of February, 1944, and reintroduced on September 10, 1945. It was reintroduced in order to make the fullest possible contribution to the needs of the United Kingdom and the continent of Europe. A public opinion poll taken in September, 1945, by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion, indicated the willingness of Canadians to accept rationing in order to feed war-devastated populations. Seven of every 10 persons polled approved of meat rationing on a stricter basis. In addition to meat, at the present time Canadians are rationed on butter, sugar and preserves.

Grain

During the war years the farmers of the Canadian prairies outdid themselves in the production of grain. Canadian farms have produced enough wheat for Canadians and for the normal bread requirements of another 80,000,000 people. In 1942 and 1943 record breaking crops were produced. By the end of July, 1946, Canada will have shipped all of the wheat accumulated in its elevators during the war years.

Wheat has always been the traditional crop of the Canadian west, and during most of the war wheat was heavily in surplus in Canada. Because of Canada's pre-eminence as one of the world's great wheat producers, Canadians are likely to think of agriculture in terms of wheat; but in this field, as in the rest of Canadian agriculture, production during the war was planned to meet the demands made by the allies.

One of the biggest factors in grain production was the matter of transportation. Between 1940 and 1943, when the Mediterranean was either closed or risky for allied shipping, and when heavy military movements were under way, economy of shipping space was of utmost importance. This applied to land transportation as well. Heavy movements of munitions and raw materials were continually taking place throughout Canada and the United States.

In addition, the United Kingdom, the chief recipient of Canadian food, was more in need of meat than flour or wheat. For this reason the Canadian government set out to change the traditional growing pattern of the prairies out of wheat into coarse grains, which could be fed to livestock.

In 1941 the government inaugurated a wheat acreage reduction program under which bonuses were paid to farmers to take acreage out of wheat and use it for summer fallow or for coarse grain production. Accordingly the acreage sown to wheat declined appreciably in the years prior to 1944.

In the autumn of 1941 another policy was introduced. The shortage of feed grains in eastern Canada appeared likely to hamper increased production of livestock. To meet this difficulty the federal government undertook to pay freight rates on feed grain moved from the Prairie Provinces to eastern Canada or to British Columbia.