

within the province for 1915 amounted to the very creditable sum of \$30,873,700, an increase of \$689,600 over 1914. This increase is in reality greater than these figures would indicate. Values for 1915 averaged 10 per cent. lower than for 1914; based on the same valuations, the amount of home production for 1915 would be \$33,961,070, or an increase of \$3,776,970 over 1914.

Turning to imports, an equally satisfactory state of affairs is apparent. In 1914 the value of imports from other Canadian provinces and foreign sources totalled \$25,199,125, whilst in 1915 the value of imported agricultural produce has been reduced to \$16,402,561, a decrease of \$8,796,564.

The decrease of importations, so satisfactory to note, is due to several reasons: Increased production; a decrease in population owing to military drafting, and in some degree to the decreased purchasing powers of the people owing to financial depression; and there are also reasons for increased production: The educational and demonstrational activities of the Department of Agriculture, a favorable season for crops, the collapse of real estate inflation, with the people getting back to the land, the result of federal and provincial appeals for "patriotism and production," increased railway facilities and more and better roads. The satisfactory results as to both decrease of importations and increase of production would seem to indicate that we have turned the corner for good. On all sides may be observed a realization of this fact. In spite of the financial strain under which our province, in common with other countries, is laboring, land settlement is being effected, and land-clearing is proceeding apace. That this is so is plainly shown by the large sales of institute powder, which have been made during the past year. Farmers are keeping more and better stock, and raising more and better crops, due largely to the excellent educative propaganda carried out by the Provincial Department of Agriculture and the energetic activities of the expert officials attached to this department. An increase of 30.9 per cent. in grain crops, and 8.30 per cent. in live stock is shown for the past year.

The country adjacent to the line of the Grand Trunk Pacific between Hazelton and Tete Jaune Cache is rapidly being settled, and we may look forward to a large agricultural production being secured from this territory in the near future. The Peace River country is also beginning to produce well, and when the railway reaches there it will have traffic in plenty.

The Canadian Northern and the Pacific Great Eastern railways are also opening large tracts of fertile soil, which will soon help to materially swell agricultural production.

#### Agricultural Conditions.

The year 1915 has, on the whole, been a good one for farmers and fruit growers. Hay and grain crops, whilst light in the Coast districts, were very heavy in the Interior parts of the province, and were harvested in excellent condition. Prices have been satisfactory. A marked improvement is noticeable in the quality of stock kept by farmers. There are many fine dairy herds in the different districts of the province, which would be a credit to any country. Prices for beef, mutton and pork have kept at a satisfactory level. Dairying is making marked progress. Several new creameries have been started in different parts of the province. The quality of creamery butter shows a great improvement, and prices have been well maintained. Poultry products show a decided falling off, owing to the very high prices for grain and mill feed which prevailed in the early part of the year, resulting in poultrymen selling off a large portion of their laying stock. Prices for eggs and poultry continue remunerative to the up-to-date poultryman.

Fruit growers have had, on the whole, a satisfactory year. The crop was light but of good quality in the Coast sections, and above normal in the Interior districts of Southern British Columbia. The prices for small fruits were, as a rule, good. Apples were a heavy crop, and prices remunerative to the growers. The Okanagan Valley alone shipped out many carloads of fruit and vegetables in 1915, and, in addition, a very large quantity of vegetables were utilized by the evaporating plants established last year at three points in the Valley. The increase in tariff on apples will prove of undoubted value to our young but growing fruit industry, by affording an adequate measure of protection against the unfair dumping of low-grade American fruit in the markets of the Middle West, and those of our Coast cities.

I cannot with the time at my disposal go into the details of all the activities of the Department of Agriculture through the various co-operative organizations under Agricultural Associations, the Farmers' and Women's Institutes, which have a total membership of about 14,000, crop competitions, demonstrations and experimental plots, seed distribution, and fruit-packing and pruning schools, all of which have had splendid results in improved methods and better and more crops, better marketed. For instance, as a result of the work carried out by the department in seed distribution, both corn and alfalfa crops (indispensable for stock purposes) are success-

fully grown in practically all districts of Southern British Columbia, and are now also being successfully tried out in the newly opened areas of Central British Columbia. A few years ago, the silo in this province was practically unknown. During the past few years, over one hundred have been erected.

Material assistance towards the marketing of orchard produce to the best advantage has been afforded by the Markets Commissioners stationed in the prairie provinces and in the City of Vancouver.

#### Agricultural Credits Act.

The putting into effect of the Agricultural Act of 1915, passed at the last session of the Provincial Legislature, whereby loans may, on the approval of Board of Commissioners, be made to farmers, will do a great deal towards encouraging agriculture in this province. The chief difficulty that the farmer has at the present time is to secure capital for the legitimate development of his place on a long-term loan at a reasonable rate of interest. This bill, administered by a competent Board of Commissioners, will remedy this handicap under which the farmer is suffering, and it may confidently be expected that the experience of New Zealand and other countries, where the principle of agricultural credit to farmers has been adopted with such success, will be repeated in our province.

#### Forestry.

The serious depression of the lumber industry for some years past emphasized the need for constructive work to be done in the markets in which our lumber is sold. Hence, at the beginning of 1915 the co-operation of the Dominion Government was sought with the result that the Chief Forester of the province was appointed a Special Trade Commissioner for Canada and despatched on a tour of investigation of the world's lumber markets. This work has produced most valuable results, the most immediate being the important arrangements entered into with the British authorities, under which purchases of Western lumber are no longer made to American intermediaries who are confined to those portions of the British Empire.

In this connection the Provincial Government placed the services of its departments at the disposal of the British authorities for the handling of any lumber cargoes desired, and during last summer a promising business along these lines was initiated. It was a great misfortune that at this critical moment the disastrous slide in the Panama Canal should have suddenly interrupted this lumber trade with Europe. Nevertheless, during last summer and early autumn the wheels of industry were kept turning to some extent by the business placed through the Forest Branch at a time when the lumber industry had particular need for such assistance. The Panama Canal will reopen for business, according to latest accounts, before the end of April, and the European market will again be opened to our manufactures if tonnage can be secured. In order that no opportunity may be lost the Provincial Government has placed a Lumber Commissioner in the United Kingdom, who will keep closely in touch with all market developments and particularly with the purchasing department of the Imperial Government.

The investigation into the South African, Indian and Australian markets for British Columbia lumber has given most encouraging indications of future business, but unfortunately the shipping situation has prevented us from taking advantage of the great variety of business offered. As soon as shipping becomes more plentiful, there is every prospect of a far larger export trade in lumber from this province, especially to the other portions of the British Empire in which tariff preferences are now under consideration.

In the Eastern Canadian and prairie markets the publicity work which the Provincial Government has carried on during the last twelve months has been of a very striking character. While British Columbia, by reason of location and export facilities, must make every effort to secure its full share of the export lumber trade, the main markets for its products are on this continent. In proportion to population Canada uses more lumber than any other country, and despite the fact that with the exception of the prairie region, the Dominion is essentially a forest country, the timbered areas of Eastern Canada are already unable to supply the local demand. Both Eastern Canada and the prairie provinces have in the past imported hundreds of millions of feet of rough lumber from the United States. The forest products of British Columbia are equal or superior to those imported, and it is felt that a determined effort should be made to hold this domestic market for home products. Representatives of the Forest Branch have been stationed at Toronto and Regina to protect the interests of British Columbia in the lumber markets of Eastern Canada and the prairie provinces.