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## Agricultural Situation Reviewed By Mr. W.R. Shaw

The following excerpts are from a review of the agricultural situation in the Province given last evening by Mr. W. R. Shaw, Deputy Minister of Agriculture.

"Since last April a great many changes have taken place—changes in production—changes in markets. Since that time we have had one of the best growing years in our history, and we can still look out on blooming flowers and fields that are still verdant and green. Never in our recollection did we have pastures so lush and maintained so consistently at a high level during the season. There were no weak spots and dry periods in pastures, and in many cases the pastures have been taken in, packed down in holes in the ground, and are now being fed out to our dairy cattle.

At our own Falconwood Farm we put approximately 325 tons of grass and corn silage up for winter feeding; some of it in a tall silo; some of it in a pit silo; some of it in an enclosure on top of the ground; and some of it treated with molasses; and some of it not treated at all. Our experience with this marvellous cattle food has been a very happy one and indicates to me a future in the use of grasses of great economic importance in our feeding programme.

We had a tremendous hay crop, too, in the Province, and a great many fields of hay have never been touched. By the way, the hay market seems to be doing dourly. \$15.00 to \$16.00 is being offered, and the demand seems to be indifferent. Large supplies are available from marshlands in the adjacent provinces, and Quebec is sending hay right by our doorway into the market in Newfoundland. Hay at \$15.00 per ton is scarcely worth bothering with. Let us hope for improved conditions.

**Potatoes**

The potato is looking up a bit from the lowly estate it occupied in 1950. Some of the things I predicted in the late broadcasts of last Spring have taken place—and one of them was that we might run up against a tight position in potatoes this year. Well, here is in brief the production. Canadian acreage was down 105,000 acres less than in 1950, and the 1950 acreage was one of the lowest for twenty-five years.

Prince Edward Island producers, discouraged with two very lean years in receipts and high costs of production, reduced their acreage from 45,000 acres to a little better than 31,000 of which about 21,000 were seeded, which is quite a substantial drop—too much in fact, for I think a normal acreage would be from 36,000 to 40,000 acres for this Province. And in addition to a decrease in acreage we have run into a decrease in production per acre.

The whole thing means that potato production in Canada has gone from 87 million bushels in 1950 to around 70 million in 1951. Down south of the border the same general condition exists. Instead of the 444 million bushel production of 1950 their production is down to around 337 million in 1951, which is possibly absorbed in their market last year.

"Coming back to the Island situation again we will possibly have less than one-half the marketable potatoes this year that we had last year. The market at present is reasonably keen, and I understand that \$2.00 per 75 pound bag is still the price for tablestock; while seed is moving at \$1.65 per bushel with an occasional flurry to complete car loadings up to \$1.75. These are good prices. There has been a tendency on the part of producers to hold back the movement.

"The influence of a strengthening market has been one reason, and the fact that there is ample storage for winter holdings is another. I understand however there is rather a scarcity of reefer cars and this is a matter that should be investigated at once. I am personally of the opinion that, irrespective of future market trends (and the situation really does look good) it is always wise to keep potatoes moving to the trade, particularly when the prices are good.

**Orderly Movement Desirable**

"Even with an apparent shortage in potato production if everyone persists in holding up potatoes there could be later in the

**Turnips**

"The situation on turnip production is an evidence of farmer difficulties. We have a large number of producers who raise too large an acreage in the hope of easing their production out on to the turnip market. There is a gentleman by the name of 'Turnip Maggot' that had something to say about that, and he is a tough, active enemy against whose activities even an atom bomb would not have much effect. In any event we do not know yet how to control him and he is an undesirable citizen who is like many consumers, crazy for Prince Edward Island turnips.

"The final result is that farm producers have large quantities of turnips which are not intended for export that must be stored and fed to cattle. And a large number have too many for that purpose. Turnip prices at the moment are 30¢ per bushel.

**Livestock**

"Last May hog prices at Moncton were about \$34.00 for Grade A, and at Charlottetown \$33.00. Just a year ago Grade A hogs were 28.00 and B 27.60. At the present moment Moncton prices are \$29.50 for Grade A, and at Charlottetown \$28.50. In between, in July, hog prices drifted up to 40.50. A very high price. As a matter of fact, I think too high. I would also say that at the present moment I think they are a little too low, but nevertheless that is where they rest. To offer a comment on the hog situation in Canada I would say that we are going to have more pork products than we can consume in Canada this year.

"The Western farmer with large quantities of coarse grain and difficulties in getting it to market is going into hogs again, and this will intensify the surplus volume within the next eight or ten months.

"Unfortunately the dollar situation in Britain is bad, and up to the present moment we haven't a pound under contract for that market. It is true the United States market is open, but there are actually more hog products coming into Canada from the United States than there are going out to the United States from Canada. It will be interesting to keep in touch with this situation. Prices of hogs, however, should hold reasonably firm at present levels for some time.

"Cattle prices have been reasonably strong. Last May the price was \$30.00 at Moncton for choice steers and also \$30.00 at Charlottetown, with heifers and other grades being maintained at lower levels. In July the price for choice steers was up to 32.00 while just a year ago the price was 23.00 and for heifers 22.50. At the present time the price of \$29.00-\$30.50 is being quoted at Moncton for choice, and at Charlottetown \$27.00-\$27.50, with other grades down to lower figures. Good cows are \$21.50 at Charlottetown, and bulls \$22.50-\$23.50. Bull prices at Moncton are \$23.00-\$24.50 for good; with cows \$22.00-\$23.00. These are only quotations, and not definite, actual figures as available from the Montreal stockyards. I am of the opinion that it is very desirable if we are to have an accurate idea of prices on the different grades of cattle shipped to market that actual prices to the producer would be much more desirable than the quoted prices obtainable at present.

"Lambs are ranging above last year's prices with \$29.00 to \$29.50 for good spring lambs at Moncton, and \$65.00 for rail Grade A's. We have no quotations at the moment from Charlottetown. Montreal prices show a strong tendency, bulls selling at \$25.00-\$27.00, with lambs \$32.00-\$33.00 for good.

**Dairying**

"The production of butter in Prince Edward Island from January 1st to the end of September, 1951, amounted to 3,799,000 pounds, compared with 3,661,000 pounds for the same period for 1950. This shows an increase in the Province of the end of September of this year of 138,000 pounds, or approximately 4%. In October the manufacture of butter was the heaviest in the history of the Province for that particular month, with approximately 598,000 pounds being made, compared with 439,000 pounds for the same month last year. This shows an increase for October of 1951 of 151,000 pounds or 34.4%. The total amount of butter made from January 1st to the end of October of this year was 4,189,000 pounds, compared with 4,289,000 pounds for the same period last year; a total increase of 220,000 pounds, or 5.2%.

"Cheese: There is an increase in production of cheese in the Province for this year also. From January until the end of September, 1951, there were 616,000 pounds made, compared with 558,000 pounds for the same period last year. This is an increase at the end of that period of 60,000 pounds, or 11%. In October the production of cheese was also extremely high, with 118,000 pounds being made compared with 65,000 pounds for the same month last year. The increased production for October of this year was, therefore, 53,000 pounds, or 82.7% over the same month last year. The sum total of cheese made at the end of October, 1951, was 734,000 pounds; compared with 621,000 pounds for the same period last year; an increase of 113,000 pounds, or 18.3%.

"Canada. The total pounds of butter made in Canada from January 1st to September 31st of this year was 210,000,000 pounds, compared with 217,000,000 pounds for 1950. The decrease in Canada to the end of September was nearly 7,000,000 pounds, or ap-

proximately 3.1%. The total production of cheese in Canada at the end of September, 1951, amounted to approximately 69,000,000 pounds, compared with 81,000,000 pounds in 1950; a decrease of nearly 12,000,000 pounds, or 14%. There are no figures published yet for the production of cheese in Canada for the month of October, 1951.

"Prices: The price of butter has continued steady in the Maritime times during the past 2 1/2 months. In Nova Scotia the latest official prices received were 66¢ wholesale for first grade prints delivered F.O.B. Halifax with local jobbing at 68¢. In New Brunswick the demand for butter is only fair, and on some markets, slightly lower prices have been offered although the official quotation remains the same from that province, with creamery to wholesalers—1 and 2 pound prints, 65¢ delivered, and local jobbing 67¢.

"In Prince Edward Island creamery salesmen are finding markets for butter rather dull at the present time, especially for two-pound prints. One cause for this may be the extremely high production in the Province at the present time. The wholesale price for first grade prints is quoted at 63 1/2¢ F.O.B. Charlottetown, with local jobbing at 65¢. Prices on the Montreal and Toronto markets have advanced slightly within the past two weeks, with No. 1 Solids now being quoted in the Montreal market at 63 7/8¢ delivered, with Toronto 63 1/2¢ to 64¢ delivered.

"We should, therefore, not be expecting a lowering in the price of butter when prices in the two principal cities of the Dominion are advancing at the present time. In Montreal the price of large Ontario White Cheese is quoted at 36¢ with colored at 36¢ to 36 1/4¢. The price of Island-made Cheddar Cheese at the present time is from 37¢ to 38¢ per pound, depending on the destination to which it is consigned, with the demand rather slow, and the production considerably higher than last year.

**Wool**

"The wool market has been doing some gymnastics during the past year. Prices soared early in the season due to war conditions and orders, but with the withdrawal of such orders the market took a sharp nose-dive from over \$1.00 per pound down to an advance of 25¢ or 30¢.

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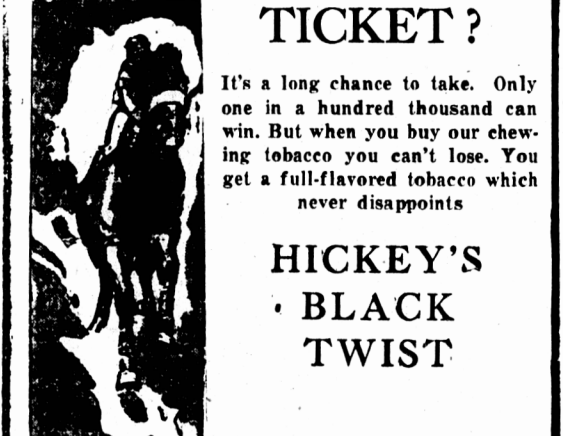
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