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## COMMONWEALTH CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BRITISH DIET

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### **Canada's Contribution to the British Diet**

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In this short paper I will deal only with the contribution made by Canada to the British diet and with what Canada may be able to do in the future.

Canada is the second largest country in the world in area, but one of the small countries as far as population is concerned, as it has only 13,545,000 people (at 1 June 1949). It is a great producer of food, particularly wheat, oats and barley, livestock products such as bacon, meat, cheese, eggs and poultry, and also fruit, such as apples and strawberries.

During the recent war the Canadian people not only took an active part in the war itself, contributing soldiers, sailors and airmen in large numbers and also building ships, manufacturing guns and munitions of war, but they also increased their food production to a very astonishing extent. For example, they produced 3,400,000 hogs for slaughter in 1938 and had increased this to 7,400,000 in 1944. Cattle marketings increased from 1,100,000 head in 1938 to 2,100,000 in 1948. Cheddar cheese increased from 119,000,000 lb. in 1938 to 177,000,000 in 1945 and eggs from 219,000,000 dozen in 1938 to 377,000,000 in 1947. More figures might be quoted but they would be wearisome. To make the point clear, however, and to show what an effort was made by the farmers of Canada and the meat-packing interests it may be mentioned that in 1944 Canada exported 660,000,000 lb. bacon, whereas in 1938 she only exported 160,000,000 lb. The increase of 500,000,000 lb. shows what can be done by united effort. The major food contributions of Canada during the past 10 years are given in Table 1.

I think we will all agree that these large quantities of food have contributed much to the British diet, particularly in wheat and flour, bacon and ham, cheese and other milk products and meat, and also, in smaller amounts, in other foods such as salmon, apples, eggs and honey.

It is considered that 2800-3000 Cal./person daily are required in temperate climates to keep average men and women in good, healthy condition, but that those engaged in

Table 1. *The major contributions of food by Canada to the United Kingdom during the past 10 years*

Food	Year	Quantity
Wheat (bushels)	1947-8	171,000,000
Flour, included in above (long tons)	1947-8	750,000
Bacon and ham (lb.)	1944	677,000,000
Beef, bone-in-basis, in addition to large quantities of ox-tails, tongues and other offal (lb.)	1945	175,000,000
Mutton and lamb (lb.)	1945-6	19,700,000
Poultry (lb.)	1944-5	2,000,000
Eggs, shell (dozen)	1945	42,000,000
in dried form (dozen)	1945	47,000,000
Cheese (lb.)	1945	131,000,000
Evaporated milk (cases)	1940-1	710,000
Dried skim milk powder (lb.)	1947	8,000,000
Spray-dried whole milk powder (lb.)	1945-6	4,200,000
Potatoes (long tons)	1946	70,300
Apples, British Columbia (boxes)	1946	2,550,000
evaporated Nova Scotia (lb.)	1942	6,720,000
Strawberries, sulphur-dioxide pulp (lb.)	1941	2,725,000
Plums and prunes, sulphur-dioxide pulp (lb.)	1941	3,615,000
Other fruits, sulphur-dioxide pulp (lb.)	1948	4,680,000
Beans, dried (bushels)	1944	443,000
Peas, dried and whole (bushels)	1946	445,000
Lard (lb.)	1944	9,000,000
Salmon (cwt.)	1942	738,518
Honey (lb.)	1940	11,000,000
Maple products		Considerable quantities prewar

very heavy work need much more. Daily consumption in the U.S.A. is estimated at 3168 Cal./person. Canada's food contribution along with that of the other Commonwealth countries and of Argentina, together with food produced at home, has kept the average person in this country in a very healthy condition.

During the war years it proved impossible for Great Britain to meet all her war expenditure and also pay for the enormous quantities of food which had to be purchased, so Canada, along with other nations, came to her aid. Canada made her gifts of over \$2,000,000,000.00 and interest-free loans of over \$1,000,000,000.00, along with the conversion of various assets into cash, so that the total was in the neighbourhood of \$4,000,000,000.00. Thus for years hard-pressed Britain was able to get food from Canada without actually paying for it.

Since the war she has made desperate efforts with Marshall Aid and a line of credit from Canada (of \$1,250,000,000.00) to pay for all the food that she purchased all over the world. The Canadian loan was of course spent in Canada.

The question of sterling area and dollar area arose and the question of purchasing in soft currency countries and hard currency countries came to the fore, and Britain was hard pressed for dollars. Even the exceedingly able Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps, found the situation most difficult. It is very difficult to-day.

Despite the fact that Canada came to the aid of Britain since 1942 to the extent to which she did, an extent greater per head than the very generous assistance from the United States, we find that Britain does not want to buy food from Canada, which is

a hard currency country, but prefers to buy from Poland, Hungary, Russia and Denmark. We have been told that Britain cannot buy bacon and ham, eggs and poultry, salmon, apples and various other foods from Canada. She will continue to purchase wheat and cheese for 1950 at least.

This decision works to the detriment of the Canadian farmer, who has come to look upon the British market as a sure and safe area where prime bacon, choice apples and excellent sockeye salmon can be sold at fair prices. Owing to the terrible mess which the markets of the world are in, it is impossible for Canada to sell where she otherwise would, so the situation is resented by the farmers and fishermen of that Dominion.

If dollar difficulties can be surmounted, Canada can produce very large quantities of food for Britain, particularly of wheat, bacon, cheese, apples, eggs and salmon.

#### *Food production in Canada*

Actually the total production of agricultural products in Canada is as high now as it was at any time during the war, lower in some products, but higher in others but, owing to the ending of rationing and to increased population we consume more of our home-produced foods. True, in 1941 and 1942 we had a very large crop of wheat, and this year we have a smaller one.

If there were an incentive, we could divert production to the more essential foods, for example, decrease our beef production and increase our pork production. We could increase our wheat acreage at the expense of oats, barley and rye and also by reduction of summer fallow.

If we should make notable discoveries in research, such as development of disease-resistant or frost-resistant varieties of grains, we could largely increase the production of that particular cereal variety. If we should have a marked increase in agricultural immigration that would increase our farm help and step up our output.

Within fairly recent years, Canadian agricultural scientists added millions of acres to the area of grain production in Canada, by the development of early-maturing varieties. By creating new varieties of rust-resistant wheats they made possible the addition of hundreds of millions of bushels to the world's cereal supply. Improved varieties are being produced from year to year.

The Dominion's Department of Agriculture has 2100 trained technical and professional employees on its staff. Many, of course, are engaged in routine and inspection work and not in research, but the Experimental Farms Service alone keeps hundreds busy.

#### *Exports to the United Kingdom*

*Wheat and flour.* Canada is one of the largest exporters of wheat in the world. True, the United States produced 1,120,000,000 bushels this past year, but there is a huge population to eat it. India and China produce large quantities of wheat, but have even larger populations to consume it. Canada, with a small population, has a large amount to export. She produces yearly between 350,000,000 and 400,000,000 bushels of the very best wheat in the world. Of this quantity, 140,000,000 bushels are under contract to be sold to Great Britain at \$2.00/bushel. Of this, the delivery of a small quantity

may be deferred in order to permit Britain to use the dollars for the purchase of bacon and salmon.

In 1944 Canada had 21,200,000 acres of wheat, and the acreage was increased to 27,500,000 in 1949. Depending on the prospective demand and price, the acreage can be decreased or increased, but it is fairly safe to assume that Canada will have yearly available for export or carry over 260,000,000 bushels in the form of wheat or flour. If Britain needs it she can have the bulk of it at a fair price.

*Cheese and butter.* For some years Canada has consumed all the butter she produced, but owing to the sale of margarine being allowed in 1949 for the first time, she will now have a small quantity of butter that might be added to the supplies from New Zealand, Australia and Denmark for the British diet.

Cheese is a product of which Canada is very proud. She contracted to supply 50,000,000 lb. during the past year, and could have supplied more. If given the incentive she could probably supply double the 1949 contract within a year or two.

*Bacon and ham.* As already stated, Canada supplied Britain with 657,000,000 lb. of bacon and nearly 20,000,000 lb. of ham in 1944. This constituted 80% of the bacon imported into Britain that year and 28% of the ham.

Owing to various conditions, including the uncertainty of retaining the British market for bacon, the production of this pork product has declined in Canada, and the consumption has increased, so that during the past year barely 100,000,000 lb. have been exported to Great Britain, but provided a long-term contract is entered into at a satisfactory price, double that amount could be exported to Britain.

*Eggs.* In 1945 we shipped the equivalent in shell eggs, dried eggs, and frozen eggs of nearly 90,000,000 dozen shell eggs. In 1949, 46,000,000 dozen were contracted for, and for 1950 the British Ministry of Food declines to enter into any contract. Canada has eggs for sale, but Britain won't buy. However, if need be, about 50,000,000 dozen eggs could be supplied to the British market.

*Beef.* Canadian beef is now being sold to the U.S.A. or consumed in Canada, and none is coming to Britain. However, if the need arises, a very considerable quantity of beef, ox-tails and canned meat can be supplied to Great Britain.

*Mutton and lamb.* None can be supplied.

*Apples—fresh and dried.* Canada is most anxious to ship large quantities of apples from British Columbia and Nova Scotia to Britain, which is her natural market. In 1938 she supplied Britain with 2,500,000 barrels, or 43% of the British imports. She is willing and anxious to ship both barrels and boxes of fresh apples, and also evaporated apples to the British market, as in 1938.

*Preserved fruits.* Strawberries and raspberries in sulphur dioxide and canned fruits of various kinds can be exported to Britain if desired.

*Salmon.* Canada is anxious to sell thousands of cases of the very best salmon to Britain.

*Other products.* Other products, such as honey, beans, peas, milk powder, poultry, and even live cattle, can be exported in considerable quantities if dollars are available to pay for them.

There is a great desire in Canada to buy more largely from Great Britain, but being

a great agricultural country and having large manufacturing plants as well, she can never hope to buy as much as she sells. Thirteen and a half million people cannot buy as much as fifty million, but they can produce food for Great Britain in large quantities. The key to the situation is the question of a more plentiful supply of dollars for the purchase of essential foods in friendly Canada.

### Australia's Contribution to the British Diet

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#### *Present position*

In addition to the main food products, wheat and flour, meat and meat products, dairy products and eggs, dried and canned fruit, and sugar, Australia supplies a variety of miscellaneous foods which can be claimed to cover a greater range than those from any other single country exporting to the U.K. The aggregate of these miscellaneous products is considerable but, in lending variety to a monotonous diet, their importance is proportionately much greater. The more important of the miscellaneous products include edible tallow, copra, whale oil and other fats, fruit juices, jam, tomato products, cakes, puddings, honey and syrups.

Table 1. *Food imports into the United Kingdom from Australia in the first 10 months of 1949*

Foodstuff	Quantity (cwt.)	Percentage of total imports	Value (£'s sterling)
<b>Dairy products:</b>			
Butter	1,233,168	22	15,225,631
Cheese	365,657	9	2,657,880
Processed milk	80,838	10	370,562
Eggs	12,254,000*	7	1,429,728
Meat (including poultry and rabbits)	3,376,794	17	16,454,804
<b>Grain:</b>			
Wheat	14,530,628	18	19,444,170
Flour	2,245,432	21	4,308,563
Barley	1,420,384	28	1,626,580
Oats	1,104,887	100	1,176,495
Sugar	4,789,641	16	7,543,690
<b>Fruit products:</b>			
Wine	922,924†	16	441,159
Dried fruits	239,349	†	646,433
Canned fruits	495,232	†	1,756,023

\* Dozen. † Gallons. ‡ Figure not available.

Australia also supplies a considerable proportion of the protective foods, as Table 1, giving the imports of the main products in the 10 months ended October 1949, clearly shows.