

The Author of Robinson Crusoe

By R. Shelton Mackenzie.

The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, which reads like truth, and yet is wholly fictitious, was written by Daniel Defoe, who was born in London, in 1661, of humble parents, who gave him the good education upon which he entered a very troubled public life soon after he attained the age of manhood.

From his twenty-second year until late in life he was a political writer, during the reigns of the last four British sovereigns of the House of Stuart.

Occasionally, he entered into trade, and as a trader, and at one time was largely engaged in business as a wool producer. In whatever paths he trod in the pursuit of a living for himself and family, Defoe gained more notoriety than renown.

At one time Defoe was received and rewarded for what, a few months later, caused his persecution, trial and conviction as a "scandalous writer," the sentence being fine, imprisonment and the pillory; at another he was pensioned and trusted with confidential employment of the State.

Author of 254 published works and of minor essays, he deserves to be regarded as the most voluminous of English writers.

In 1719, when he was fifty-eight years old, quitting the field of political satire and controversy, Defoe struck into a novel sort of composition. The first and greatest realistic romance in our language appeared from his pen as a serial, in a London weekly periodical. The author's name was not given, but a notice, by a fictitious editor, stated that this was "a just history of facts." Within the year, four editions had to be printed, and an abridgment, "Robinson Crusoe" being thus successful from the fascinating simplicity and earnestness of the story. Defoe hastened to write a continuation, which was eagerly welcomed, though of inferior quality, and, even after this came a conclusion, entitled, "Serious Reflections During the Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, with his Vision of the Angelic World."

This was badly received, and has seldom been reprinted. But the Second Part, in which Crusoe's return to his island is the leading event, is generally included in modern editions of the work.

"That 'Robinson Crusoe' was founded on the fact, simple and sole, that a few years earlier, a sailor named Alexander Selkirk had lived for more than four years on an island in the Pacific, without a companion, was regarded by Sir Walter Scott as not throwing a doubt upon the originality and genius of Defoe, who, out of that incident, had constructed a tale of a new and striking character.

Selkirk, who had been a buccaneer on the Spanish Main, had been left, by his own desire, on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, in September, 1704, and remained there until February, 1709, when he was released from his voluntary exile by Captain Woodes Rogers, of the ship Duke, with whom he returned to England, in 1711. Rogers published a narrative of all that he had learned of this matter, and ten other pamphlets also treated of the subject, which excited great interest in England.

Selkirk was visited by Sir Robert Steele, the author, who wrote:

"It was a matter of great curiosity to hear him, as he is a man of good sense, give an account of the different revolutions in his mind in the long solitude. He was put ashore from a leaky vessel, with the captain of which he had an irreconcilable quarrel. His portion was a sea chest, his wearing-clothes and bedding, a firelock, a pound of gunpowder, a few pounds of tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible and a few other books of devotion, with some other trifles concerning his instruments."

From what Selkirk said, and Woodes Rogers wrote, a man of genius created an immortal narrative, read by old and young, in many lands and languages.

It was charged, even in his own time, that Defoe had got possession of Selkirk's papers and made use of them. In fact, however, Selkirk did not die until 1723, four years after "Robinson Crusoe" was published. He then was mate of a king's ship—the Weymouth.

Walter Scott remarked that Defoe was acknowledged to have been very correct in his use of sea terms. In fact, the whole story has a briny flavor.

With the exception of Crusoe's residence on his island, he is almost always on board ship. Defoe, who had made several voyages to and from Spain, when he was in the wool trade, might easily have picked up as much technical knowledge of marine matters as is displayed in his story.

There is neither humor nor passion in it, except it be the deep remorse which affects the wanderer, who had not regarded the wise counsel of his father—a remorse which eventually fills his mind with religious faith in Providence, which had saved his life when a whole ship's crew had been wrecked and drowned. "Robinson Crusoe, in fact, is as much a homely as a romance.

There is no attempt at fine writing in this book. Defoe used plain, nervous language on all occasions, but in this he appears to have aimed at producing a simple, vigorous style, such as a person like Robinson Crusoe, educated in a country school in Yorkshire, in the middle of the seventeenth century, would have used. In his "Journal of the Plague in London in 1665," which was a fictitious narrative founded on recorded facts, Defoe's own style became highly elevated and impressive. Such would have been out of character and place had Crusoe been set down as telling that terrible story. It would be difficult to find any one who has not read "Robinson Crusoe," pitying his long exile from the world, rejoicing in the accession of Friday to his household, grieving over the faithful creature's untimely death, and rejoicing over his own liberation after twenty-seven years' captivity.

For young people, this narrative, which has not the most remote appearance of being fictitious, has always been singularly fascinating. Hundreds and thousands of boys have been eagerly possessed by the desire to find a lone island in some remote sea where each might lead such a life as Crusoe had seemed to have passed through. Nor is this admiration limited to youth. I have often seen aged men who had taken up the book per chance linger half a day over it, unwilling and unable to put it down, apparently accepting it, as they had done in their school-boy times, as an authentic narrative. This constitutes its great merit. Every incident might have occurred, and poor Crusoe, in his solitude, does precisely what nine-tenths of mankind would probably have done under like circumstances.

Numerous imitations of "Robinson Crusoe" have been made at home and abroad and it has been translated into French, Dutch, German, Italian, Russian, Greek, Latin and Arabic.



Amundsen, famous explorer, now in New York, intends to set out on an expedition to the unknown area west of Greenland, with three aeroplanes, in the early spring, with the idea of crossing the north pole during the light.

British Test Invention for Drying Farm Crops.

An invention is being tried by the Institute of Agricultural Engineers at Oxford University, which, if developed, will remove one of the chief causes for grumbling on the part of British farmers and revolutionize English harvesting methods.

The invention is a new process for drying farm crops, a very necessary one in the damp English climate. The plan is to cut the crop and make it into circular stacks of ten to twenty tons weight around a hollow central chamber. Heated air will then be blown over it by powerful fans. Haystacks have been dried by this means in ten hours without fermentation.

It is asserted that the new process will allow a harvest to proceed in any weather, save field labor, give a greater crop yield, make straw better, and facilitate plowing.

The Birch Family.

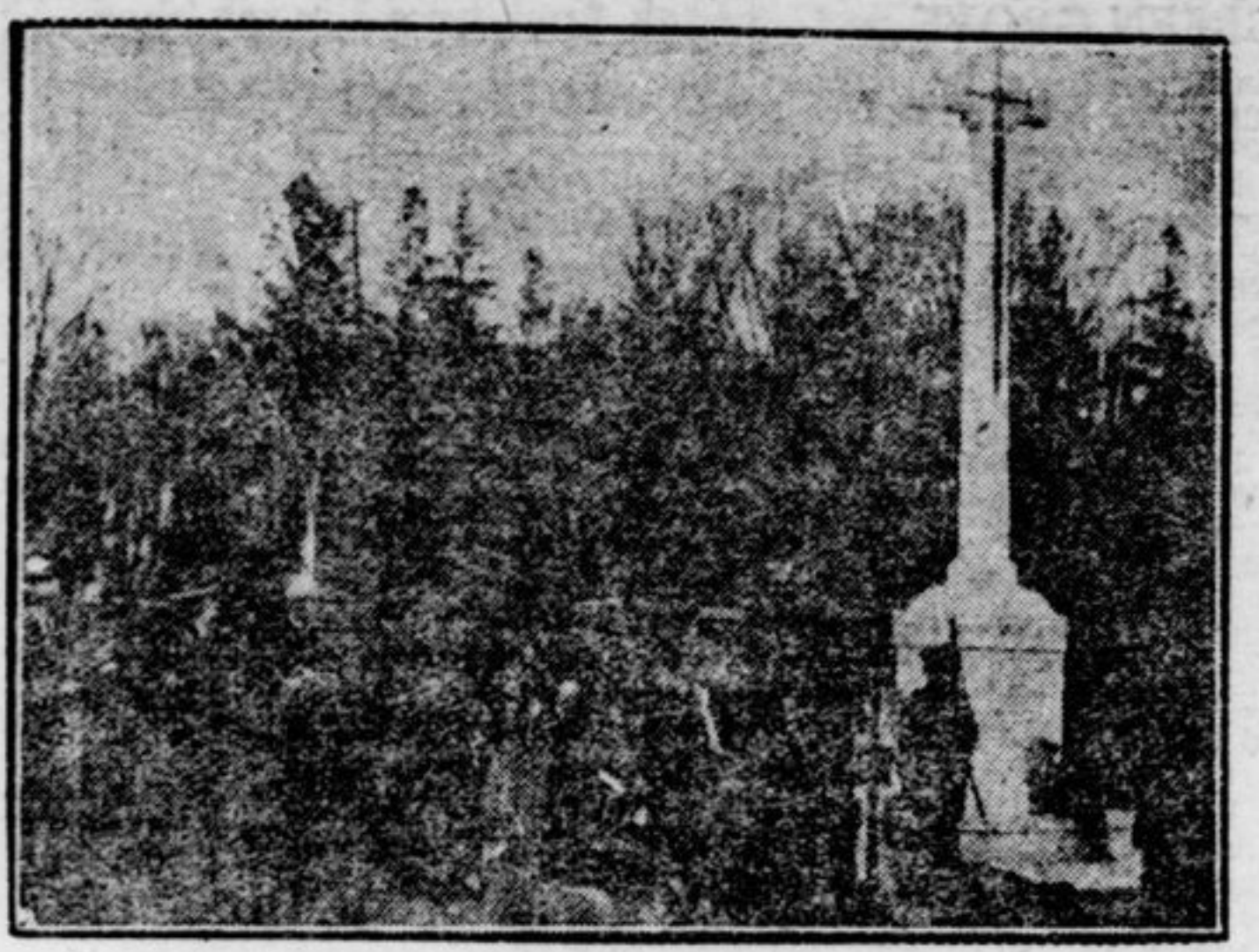
Lord Lytton, when viceroy of India, was seated one day at a public dinner next to a lady whose name was Birch, and who, though very good-looking, was not over-intelligent. Said she to his excellency: "Are you acquainted with any of the Birches?" "Oh, yes," replied Lord Lytton, smiling, "I knew several of them most intimately while at Eton" (the great English school where pupils are flogged for offenses against the rules). "Did you like them?" was the next question. "Decidedly not," replied Lytton. "My Lord," said the lady, frigidly, "you forget the Birches are relatives of mine."

"And they cut me unmercifully," responded the viceroy, with a laugh. But the lady was too dense to see the joke. She rose from the table in a huff and told her husband that his excellency had insulted her.

A Life Job.

"Your hardware dealer has employed me to collect the bill you owe him," said the collector on being ushered into the customer's office.

"You're to be congratulated," replied the customer, "on obtaining a permanent position."



An Amundsen way memorial was dedicated in Cobourg to those of the town and surrounding country who gave their lives in the Great War. Rev. Canon Scott officiated at the ceremony.

Aid for International Exhibitors.

Among Albertan exhibitors in the class for a Hard Red Spring Wheat. Saskatchewan Provincial Government.—To each Saskatchewan exhibitor winning a first prize \$50. To each Saskatchewan exhibitor winning a grand championship \$150.

Canadian Pacific Railway.—An award of \$100 to the Canadian scoring the highest award in Hard Wheat at the International Grain and Hay Show.

God and the Preacher.

The parish priest of Austerly. Climbed up in a high church steeple. To be nearer God, that he might hand down His word unto the people.

So he daily wrote in sermon script "What he thought was sent from Heaven. And he dropped this down on the people's heads. Two times one day in seven.

In his age, God said: "Come down and die." And he cried from out the steeple, "Where art Thou, Lord?" and the Lord replied: "Down here, among My people." —W. C. Doane.

Went to Sleep at Top of Eiffel Tower.

Letters are received every day from various parts of France, and even from America, asking permission to spend a night in the apartment which the late Alexandre Gustave Eiffel built for himself near the top of his famous tower, says a Paris despatch. Perched high in the tapering steelwork, nearly 1,000 feet from the ground, it sways considerably in an almost unceasing wind. The apartment, however, is closed to the public, and permission to spend a night there is never granted, although some of the petitioners offer large sums, or promise "any price," if granted their desire.

White Horse Famine Mutes Foreign Vioins.

Makers of violin bows are becoming anxious over the growing scarcity of white horses, from the tails of which are taken hairs for the manufacture of bowstrings, says a London despatch.

According to an expert there is a decided shortage of white horse-tail hair from Siberia and East Russia, whence the best supplies come, and thus far no suitable substitute has been found.

809 Bricks Laid in Hour by Englishman on a Bet.

The latest world record claimed here is the laying of 809 bricks in an hour, or more than thirteen a minute, says a London despatch. The feat was performed by Christopher Hull, a foreman bricklayer of Sheffield, for a wager of £10.

Hull was allowed four laborers to wait upon him, but nevertheless the performance was regarded as remarkable. The builders say many men could lay 800 daily, but the average is around 500.

A General Education.

Of 4,402 students enrolled this year in the University of Toronto, 2,837, or over fifty-four per cent, are taking courses in Arts, while only eighteen per cent, are studying Medicine and only eleven per cent, are in Applied Science. This fact would seem to indicate that there is not, as has sometimes been asserted, a tendency on the part of the young people of Ontario to overlook the advantages of a general education and to strive to enter the more highly specialized and more highly paid professions. The Arts Faculty, with which practically all the earlier Universities commenced, and which was in most cases the only Faculty for many decades, is still predominant. Nowadays many students desire, if they can afford the time, to take the Arts Course before commencing the study of Medicine, or Forestry or Law. Of those in the Arts Colleges some intend going into the Ministry, some into teaching, some into law, some into business, still others into journalism, but a great many are simply anxious to secure a liberal education in order that they may have a good equipment for whatever career they may later decide upon. To all citizens who are interested in education and in the welfare of the youth of this Dominion it is pleasing to know that Arts, the foundation of all educational systems, is still more than holding its own.



Courage has a crimson coat. Trimmed with trappings bold; Knowledge dons a dress of note, Fame's is cloth of gold. Far they ride and fair they roam, Much they do and dare; Gray-gowned patience sits at home And weaves the stuff they wear.

Zora Agrah, who is said to be the oldest man in the world, lives in Constantinople, and has just celebrated his 150th birthday. Zora's age is authenticated by a birth certificate and his memory of vivid happenings of over a century ago.

Facts.

It is a common trait to resent a fact when it conflicts with a preconceived notion. We cherish old ideas as we keep old clothes that ought to be thrown away, and we do not thank the one who takes them from us. Yet in time we come to cherish what we once resisted and make believe that it was our own from the beginning.

In politics or religion it is common to find belief a matter of inheritance rather than conviction. We receive our affiliation with a church or a party as a family legacy. If we find among our juniors a tendency to go off at a tangent and do their own thinking, that challenges the foundations we received and conserved, we are likely to denounce it as a symptom of a restless and dangerous age.

But it is healthy to ask questions and it is a necessary preliminary to real progress. The arch-foe of the social order is the person or the institution that is unquestionable. In every intellectual matter the absolute dictatorship is impossible if the truth is to be ascertained.

Facts have nothing to do with your sentiment or mine on any question. If the facts show that we are in error, our love for our own views must not prevent our changing them in accordance with what is so instead of hugging the ancient, foolish delusion.

That facts may take effect the mind must be prepared, as land is plowed and harrowed for the sowing of the seed. The capacity of the mind to repel truth often seems to exceed its capacity for receiving instruction, as many an exasperated teacher of "stupid" children is aware. But a thing is not true merely because some one says it. The teacher may be wrong. And the most inspiring teacher, most willingly followed, is not one who insists that all he says is the word of final authority. He leads his pupils in quest of truth, whatever turn the way may take, whatever the journey's end.

In the modern world we need more science, less sentimental rhapsodizing that deals in large, poetic generalities instead of accurate and definite information. It will not do to assume that the reader or hearer represents a low average of intelligence; he may know uncomfortably more of the subject in hand than the one who essays to inform him.

When handling explosives or blasting caps do not smoke or carry matches that will strike anywhere. Safety matches alone should be used for lighting fuses when necessary. Explosives and blasting caps must never be stored together.

There is little danger if explosives are handled carefully, but great danger if they are roughly handled. Explosives are a good servant but a bad master.

The Explosives Division of the Department of Mines at Ottawa has issued a small pamphlet on the Handling of Explosives, and those who have any blasting to do, it would be well to send for a copy, which will be sent free on request.

The Natural Resources Intelligence Service of the Dept. of the Interior at Ottawa says:

The extent to which the development of the Natural Resources of Canada is dependent upon railways is not sufficiently appreciated by Canadians, with the exception of the few who are intimately associated with transportation activities. When the early pioneers had to drive great distances, over difficult clay roads, and then only at seasons when such roads were passable, their wants were few, because they had to confine their trading to very limited areas.

With the advent of the railways, however, we are now able to place our produce on world markets, and to receive in exchange, indirectly, the produce of the world. This has been the situation also with respect to our forests, our mines and our fisheries. Without railways the enormous grain crops of western Canada would be useless, pulpwood, and paper, minerals and the enormous catches of fish would be of no use. The returns from the coast to the west of the week of freight car loadings in the week of Nov. 1 showed that 20,009 carloads of grain and grain products, 3,483 carloads of live stock, 291 carloads of lumber, 3,859 carloads of pulpwood, 1,238 carloads of pulp and paper, 2,114 carloads of other forest products, and 1,173 carloads of ore were moved, out of a total of 74,640 cars loaded.

The organization necessary to satisfactorily move this enormous quantity of freight, with its great number of loading and distribution points, must give cause for admiration of those responsible for such service.

Development of natural resources and railways must go hand in hand in the growth and success of Canada, and as new branches are built new areas will be opened up to cultivation, new mines will be made commercially possible, and our more distant forest resources will be available to industry.

A Hidden Library.

The Soviet Government has ordered that a search be made for certain subterranean chambers in the Kremlin in Moscow in which the secret library of Czar Ivan IV, called Ivan the Terrible, is supposed to be concealed. That veritable ruler and cultivated book lover suffered from the mania of thinking that he was constantly the object of persecution, and so wherever he stayed for any length of time he had secret subterranean chambers constructed. In the Kremlin, tradition says, he concealed his famous library of eight hundred original manuscripts, among them the priceless texts that the Greek princess Sophia Paleologue brought as her dowry to her husband, the Czar Ivan III, in the fifteenth century.

In Alaska, five miles of railway lines are laid on a glacier.

Canada's Trade With the West Indies

Considerable attention has been devoted lately both in Canada and the West Indies to the matter of expanding the volume and value of trade transacted between the two countries. The matter for some time occupied the serious attention of the Canadian Government, and as a result of its deliberations a trade delegation is now visiting the countries of the West Indies for the purpose of discovering the manners in which trade between the two countries may be broadened.

The Canadian Trade Commissioner to the West Indies, who has been visiting Canada to meet with Canadian exporters and importers for expressly the same purpose, is authority for the statement that there is a keen desire on the part of those resident in the West Indies for closer trade relations with Canada. Only recently Jamaica has taken steps to increase its fruit trade with the Dominion, the having sustained a slump, and Canada being regarded as the most promising of possible new markets.

On Canada's part there has long been a realization that she was buying through foreign channels the raw products of the West Indies which she could have procured more economically direct had better trade media existed. The lack of an adequate transportation service between the two countries has been the greatest hindrance to a better trade development. This provision, which post-war conditions caused to be neglected, is confidently hoped will be the main outcome of the conference between the Canadian trade authorities and those of the West Indies.

There is a very satisfactory volume of trade carried on between the two countries at the present time, amounting to approximately \$25,000,000. Canada's total imports from the West Indies amounted, in the last fiscal year, to \$18,813,291, of which \$7,020,415 was attributable to Barbados, \$3,289,478 to Jamaica, \$1,459,648 to Trinidad and Tobago and \$2,049,750 to other West Indies. The Dominion's exports to the West Indies totalled \$10,901,722, \$1,619,811 being to Barbados, \$3,132,042 to Jamaica, \$3,447,013 to Trinidad and Tobago, and \$2,702,846 to other British West Indies.

Trade between Canada and the West Indies is, of course, mutually carried on under advantageous conditions, the preferences each accords the other ranging from 10 to 50 per cent. These advantages have, however, been considerably offset by the lack of efficient trade media, and the two countries have remained very far apart, exchanging goods through foreign channels which resulted in considerable economic loss and the imposition of a hindrance to any further substantial trade development. This it is confidently hoped will be remedied by the Canadian trade delegation in the West Indies, and the way made smooth for an exchange of trade between the two countries which so essentially produce the needs of the other.

The export and import in the Atlantic Valley have likewise prepared for a good volume of business, and all plans are operating as a result of the larger quantity of fruit available. There have been many developments in the industry in the area, new plants being erected, enlarged, and one or two combinations effected. A combination of fruit exporters has built a large apple evaporator at Kingston, N.S., which is the largest and most modern of its kind in the Valley.

There is a gratifying increase recorded over the past few years in the export from Canada of canned and preserved fruits and vegetables, a portion in which there is considerable room for expansion. Canned and preserved fruits were exported to the United Kingdom, United States, Belgium, Bermuda, Egypt, Hong Kong, Newfoundland and other countries. The development of an export trade in canned and preserved vegetables has been remarkable. In 1922 these amounted to 4,748,000 pounds worth \$21,925, in 1923 to 5,893,163 pounds worth \$41,491, and in the fiscal year 1924, to 15,006,113 pounds worth \$1,191,450. These went to the United Kingdom, United States, Bermuda, British South Africa, Cuba, France, Newfoundland, New Zealand and other countries.

Little Mary was making her first visit to her grandfather's farm, and she and her grandfather were walking near the barnyard, she spotted a muffled calf. Clapping her hands she cried out gleefully: "Look, grandpa, look at the little one of the false face!"

The reports of the state of the sheep herd in the Atlantic Valley maintained by the Canadian National Parks Branch at Newfoundland. There is now 180 of these animals in the reserve, their numbers having increased by fifty in the past year. The experiment has demonstrated that antelope can be successfully bred in captivity.

Unlike common city gas, acetylene will explode merely upon being heated without any admixture of air.

Once every 50 years the earth is at its greatest distance from the sun and the same time Mars is.

FRUIT EVAPORATION AND CANNING PLANTS

CANADA MAKING PROGRESS IN THIS INDUSTRY

Exports to Value of \$861,311 Were Shipped During 1923 to Nine Countries.

From all accounts Canada is making considerable progress in the industry of fruit and vegetable evaporation and canning, and the country is witnessing a greater activity than ever in this direction. In the Atlantic Valley the Dominion's exports of fruit and vegetable products to the Dominion, are reported to be seasonally busy, with additional plants predicted, which will result in a normal activity in the industry, and the creation of such plants will result in a return was made upon the fruit and vegetable packing industry of Canada and much in the Dominion.

The intervening period, as that there were in the Dominion 220 plants of which 117 were devoted to canning, 64 to evaporating and 39 to packing. Ontario easily led the Dominion with a total of 156 plants, including 54 evaporating and 25 packing. British Columbia had 22 plants, a total of 26 plants, followed Quebec with 22, Nova Scotia had 11, New Brunswick 9 and Alberta 2.

Investment in Canning and Evaporating.

There was a total investment of \$60,000 invested in canning plants which had a production of \$12,000,000 of which Ontario accounted for \$20,000,000 and British Columbia \$2,000,000. The Dominion's production aggregated \$20,000,000 a production value of \$25,000,000 of which \$10,000,000 was attributable to Ontario and \$15,000,000 to British Columbia. Processed plants had a capital of \$3,500,000, invested in them and accounted for production of nearly \$5,000,000, the ratio being responsible for \$1,100,000 British Columbia for \$1,400,000, and Quebec \$1,200,000.

British Columbia's pack of canned fruit and vegetables last year amounted to 600,000 cases, the total value amounting for 14,000,000 pounds, or about 7,000 tons. Apart from jams, principal products put up in the Pacific Coast province are tomatoes, peaches, apricots, apples, berries, strawberries, and other fruits. One company alone has shipped out of the Okanagan Valley 180 cars of canned goods. Canners in 1924 contracted for larger supplies of fruit and vegetables, that of tomatoes being outstanding, and a substantial larger tonnage is expected.

Canadian Exports.

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