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The complete figures of Imports and Exports covering a full twelve months will form, a starting point for a series of yearly comparisons which as time goes on will become increasingly valuable. Pending the time when such comparisons can be made, comment may be directed to certain details which call for interpretation and elucidation.

Statistics tend to conceal as much as they reveal. Take

		the following items : —	
		<i>Exports.</i>	<i>Imports.</i>
Motor Parts			576,932
	... ..	568,69	...
		4	
Linen Manufactures			410,52a
		409,96	
	..	5	...
Potatoes			187,147
	..	114,68	...
		7	
Jute Sacks (new)	..	70,840	... 82,765

Do not these suggest that there should be some permanent notes appended to the statistics regarding the character of our trade which would guide the novice? Those at the commencement of the annual volume are a welcome step in that direction.

As a whole, the figures indicate an external trade which employs labour not merely in productive work and in collecting and distributing products being exported, but also in selling and distributing to the consumer those goods which are taken in exchange. Statistics revealing the numbers employed in this work would be helpful and necessary, especially when considering questions of unemployment. The character of the import trade is more clearly defined in its detail than was possible before, and examination discloses the fact that there are 12 items in the classification which together embrace 75 per cent. of the value of the total exports, whereas it takes 16 items to make up 40 per cent. of total import value.

IMPORTS.

	No. of items in classification.	Total Value.	Individual items £700,000 and over.	Values.	Individual items under £700,000	Value.
Class 1.	131	£29,522,506	9	£18,475,325	122	£11,047,181
Class 2.	63	6,314,436	2	3,765,340	61	2,549,096
Class 3.	340	29,204,005	5	4,448,466	335	24,755,539
	534	£65,040,947	16	£26,689,131	518	£38,351,816

EXPORTS.

Class 1.	67	£41,548,689	12	£36,773,696	55	£4,774,993
Class 2.	38	2,490,129	—	none	38	2,490,129
Class 3.	88	2,593,377	—	none	88	2,593,377
	193	£46,632,195	12	£36,773,696	181	£9,858,499

It requires 534 headings under which to classify the Imports, and even then there are large sections covered by the formula *n.e.s.*, whereas 193 headings are adequate to cover the Exports.

The small (by comparison) population in the Free State has brought to its door the same range and variety of choice as the vastly larger group of consumers in Great Britain. This advantage is not confined to luxury goods for the few, but is shared by all sections of the people.

But these Imports are not all fully manufactured articles,

and in the following table I have made a tentative suggestion towards ascertaining how much may be regarded as the "raw material" of our industries as distinct from commodities which are consumed in the form in which they are imported.

IMPORTS.				
CLASS 1.				
	Items included as raw material.	Value.	Balance.	Total.
Group A	Wheat, etc. ...	£7,852,525	£4,595,589	£12,448,114
" B	Feeding Stuffs	1,437,798	—	1,437,798
" C	...	—	2,166,439	2,166,439
" D	...	—	253,426	253,426
" E	Hops ...	821,350	3,412,229	4,233,579
" F	...	—	8,060,043	8,060,043
" G	Tobacco ...	778,030	145,077	923,107
	Total Class 1.	£10,889,703	£18,632,803	£29,522,506
CLASS 2.	...	£3,375,903	£2,938,533	£6,314,436
CLASS 3.				
Group A	Cement ...	£296,808	£991,232	£1,288,040
" B	Iron and Steel ...	400,000	1,905,787	2,305,787
" C	Non-Ferrous ...	185,087	200,000	385,087
" D	Cutlery ...	...	591,532	591,532
" E	Elec. callers ...	82,266	315,652	397,918
" F	Machinery ...	...	1,175,251	1,175,251
" G	Timber ...	...	702,167	702,167
" H	Yarns ...	66,504	1,872,667	1,939,171
" I	" ...	170,180	240,344	410,524
" J	" ...	301,436	1,252,266	1,553,702
" K	Textiles ...	...	702,445	702,445
" L	Apparel ...	...	7,153,332	7,153,332
" M	Chemicals (est.)	200,000	924,130	1,124,130
" N	Oils, Fats ...	...	2,277,277	2,277,277
" O	Leather ...	248,239	275,594	523,833
" P	Paper ...	351,512	665,768	1,017,280
" Q	Vehicles ...	291,759	2,000,000	2,291,759
" R	Rubber ...	...	494,652	494,652
" S	Fertilisers ...	336,869	2,533,249	2,870,118
	Total Class 3	£2,930,660	£26,273,345	£29,204,005
CLASS 4.	...	...	£770,459	£770,459
	Final Total	£17,196,286	£48,615,120	£65,811,406

As to Exports, they are presented in a form of classification chosen because of the facility it gives for comparison with

previous figures and with the figures of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Impressed, however, by a note of the Editor's regarding the faultiness of this classification, in that it includes under Class 1 articles which, if they cannot be classed as "manufactured" goods, are at any rate not mere raw materials, I tentatively suggest a rearrangement of the figures under two headings—

Column I.—Goods and material which go direct from the land or farm with a minimum of direct labour.

Column II.—Being products on which certain factory labour is spent before export.

EXPORT.

CLASS 1.

	Industrialised Products.	Value.	Balance.	Total.
Group A	Flour, etc. ...	£103,672	£254,837	£358,509
„ B	Grain ...	37,749	71,805	109,552
„ C	Bacon ...	3,139,571	2,408,434	5,548,005
„ D	... ..	...	20,150,740	20,150,740
„ E	Beer, Biscuits, Butter, Spirits, Margarine	11,052,635	4,329,248	15,381,883
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		£14,333,625	£27,215,064	£41,548,689
CLASS 2.—Raw Materials	...	...	2,490,129	2,490,129
CLASS 3.—Manufactured Goods	...	2,593,377	...	2,593,377
CLASS 4.—Horses, etc.	... ..	...	1,816,200	1,816,200
		<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
		Total £16,927,002	£31,521,393	£48,448,395

The main stumbling block, however, which the statistics as now published present to the ordinary observer is the "adverse" balance of trade. From time to time comments on this appear in the daily newspapers, and references are made to it on public platforms and in private discussions.

The preface to this volume of statistics shows that between the years 1904-1921 (inclusive) the country has had an adverse balance every year except during the war years, when the rise in prices inflated export values to an abnormal degree. That being so, it may be assumed that the figures do not bear the interpretation which the man in the street puts on them—namely, that we are running into debt to the extent of this balance, or "deficit" as it is called.

Definite figures which have been quoted, as to some extent

filling the gap, are as follows :—

Interest on investments abroad			£8,000,000
	
War Pensions from British Government		to	
residents in the Saorstát	...	...	2,436,830
Remittances from relatives abroad, say	...		1,000,000

This, however, still leaves a large margin to be accounted for, and it is very desirable that some authoritative statement should be made which will enable the facts to be correctly understood and a proper interpretation put upon them.