

Statistics are available as from January, 1930, of the imports into the Irish Free State of a few commodities classified by country of *origin*. These indicate that, in certain cases, striking changes in the direction of imports in favour of Commonwealth countries have occurred during the past twelve months.

Commodities and origin	1930	1931	Jan.-March 1932
	In thousand cwts.	In thousand cwts.	In thousand cwts.
Bacon: Commonwealth.....	29	39	49
Other.....	342	362	17
Butter: Commonwealth.....	24	27	17
Other.....	7	2	1
Wheat: Commonwealth.....	1,202	3,222	1,068
Other.....	4,114	2,413	134
Maize: Commonwealth.....	445	3	
Other.....	6,935	11,198	3,047
Wheaten flour: Commonwealth.....	3,089	3,166	734
Other.....	242	211	35
	in thousand £	in thousand £	in thousand £
Touring Motor Cars: Commonwealth.....	947	801	142
Other.....	110	173	8

Effect of Depreciated Currencies:

The stimulus afforded by exchange depreciation to exports from Australia and New Zealand of various agricultural commodities, especially butter, meat and wool, has helped, with other causes, to undermine the strength of particular markets, and has resulted, for example, in making Irish wool practically unsaleable in its normal market. In regard to butter, the same depressing effect has been visible. As a result of exchange depreciation by other Commonwealth countries and of their bounty systems, the Government of the Irish Free State have been compelled to introduce a system of bounties on exports of butter, simply to keep the country in butter production. This system they are anxious to terminate as speedily as possible, but, with the 25 per cent exchange premium which butter exports enjoy in Australia and the lesser premium in New Zealand, these countries can place the commodity on the British market at prices below cost of production in the Free State. The following table illustrates the points outlined in this paragraph:—

PERCENTAGE CHANGES BETWEEN 1929 AND 1931 IN QUANTITIES, VALUE AND PRICES OF BUTTER AND WOOL IMPORTED INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM
(+ increase - decrease)

	Quantity	Value	Price
	%	%	%
Butter:			
Australia and New Zealand.....	+68	+ 9	-35
Irish Free State.....	-33	-54	-32
Wool:			
Australia and New Zealand.....	+ 3	-43	-44
Irish Free State.....	-17	-59	-51

The huge increase in the imports of butter from Australia and New Zealand between 1929 and 1931, and the decline in the imports from the Irish Free State, will be noted. In consequence of these increased supplies, the price of butter has fallen by one-third. With regard to wool, the increased supplies, which were presumably the main cause of the fall in price, came mainly from South America.

Fall in Agricultural Prices:

As a producer of primary commodities, the Irish Free State has suffered severely from the fall in agricultural prices in recent years. The following index number of agricultural prices indicates the heavy and abnormal extent of the decline. (Base 1911-13=100):—

1929..	139.3
1930..	124.8
1931..	110.1

Agricultural prices in 1931 were 21 per cent less than in 1929.