

ESTONIA'S IMPORT TRADE.

The trading position of Estonia during the first years of her independent existence was characterised by several unfavourable features. Owing to the long duration of the war the demand for foreign goods was insistent, while the export trade, upon which the economic equilibrium in the country largely depends, was then still in its infancy. Another factor adversely affecting the position was the necessity for adapting industries to the new circumstance created by the loss of the Russian market, while the building up of new industries, to meet the consuming requirements of the country, made but slow progress.

During the first few years of Independence there was, besides, urgent need for renovating agricultural machines and implements. An opportunity hereto presented itself first in 1921 when trade restrictions were withdrawn, which resulted in an excess of imports of Emk. 2.196 millions or 32,4 per cent. of the total of foreign trade. Later, in 1923, the good harvest of the previous year, in combination with the currency inflation in Germany, enabled importers even to lay in large stocks of goods and wares, which showed itself in an adverse balance for that year amounting to Emk. 3.620 millions or 24,1 per cent.

But, as soon as these urgent necessities were met, the demands became more or less normal again, as will be seen from a later table comparing the imports of 1924 and 1925, as also from the development of import trade in the current year.

In spite of sporadically higher requirements of certain commodities as, for example, cotton and leather in 1925 and seed-grain and fertilisers in 1924, the general trend of Estonia's imports has not displayed any decided tendency to increase, which is so characteristic of her exports, and the value of imports has since 1924 kept almost on the same level. The very slight advance which it reveals points rather to a normal development of the country's economic life and to the rapid expansion of her export activities. A clear picture of the development of both imports and exports is afforded in the following diagram.