

other types of food, and so a market for what is known as SO2 was not readily available. During the first period of the war our chief difficulty was to try to persuade the British to take SO2, and I might suggest that one of the members active in trying to bring that about was the member for Fraser Valley. He did on many occasions emphasize the importance of getting rid of this product, which provides an outlet for surplus, which cannot be sold, of fresh berries in the province of British Columbia. As a result of representations made by himself and others, and the efforts exerted on their behalf by the special products board, we did from time to time persuade the British to take certain quantities of SO2 in order to relieve the situation existing in British Columbia. Last year the British government asked for this product. They asked what quantity of it we could supply and we made arrangements to have supplied to them the quantity which was available at that time. This year, when I was in Britain in January, we approached the British government to find out whether they would be willing to take SO2 this year, and in what quantity, and the understanding we reached with them was that they were anxious to obtain the product and would take whatever quantity could be made available to them this year.

I quite agree with what the member for Fraser Valley said a few moments ago. In spite of the fact that jam and fruit generally is not of the same food value as bacon, butter, wheat or products of that kind, when there are difficulties in obtaining butter, jam is a very good spread for bread to induce children to eat more of that commodity than they otherwise would, and it is particularly good for the type of bread which is being supplied children on the European continent and in Britain at the present time. It makes the bread more palatable and a better food because of the fact that it has jam upon it. So at the present time the British are placing perhaps more emphasis upon the obtaining of this product than they were at the beginning or even in the middle of the war. The net result is that officials of the department approached the fruit producers of British Columbia and obtained assurances that certain quantities of SO2 would be made available this year to the British government in barrels, and my understanding is that all the barrels necessary for the shipment of SO2 in the form in which the British government desire to have it, for the making of jam to be served on the continent or perhaps mainly in Britain itself, have been assured to make available

the quantities which the organized producers of British Columbia agreed could be made available from that province. So as far as the first question is concerned I can only say we feel that provision has been made to make available to Britain, in containers suitable for the purpose, SO2 in the quantity which has been arranged.

The second part of the question is stated in these words:

The second question—and these are straight questions—is, will the government grant an immediate export permit for five hundred tons of raspberries to the United States . . .

Later the hon. gentleman repeated the question in these words:

. . . will the government grant an immediate export permit for five hundred tons of raspberries to the United States, barrels and containers for which will be supplied by the United States purchasers, thus permitting raspberry barrels on hand to be used for the present emergency in the marketing of strawberries. That is a straight question, and it is a vital one for the people of Canada.

The answer to that question, Mr. Speaker, if it will be helpful in the decisions that are to be reached, can be made just as direct as the answer to the other question. In the first place the Department of Agriculture is anxious to see that the SO2 promised, not by contract but by word of mouth, to the British government will be made available to them. The department is anxious to have that undertaking fulfilled in order to keep faith, if you like, with those who are expecting to obtain the product in order to provide food of the type I was discussing a few moments ago for the people of Great Britain. But we do not consider that we should press that matter to the point of making it impossible for the berry growers of British Columbia to be able to market their product. I think I can say to the hon. member for Fraser Valley or to any other hon. member of the house that there would be very little if any hesitation in issuing permits to have five hundred tons of these berries exported to the United States. Some further consideration might have to be given to the question whether more than that quantity should be exported, in view of all the circumstances, but I think I can say without fear of any other decision being rendered that every possible consideration will be given to requests for permits for the shipment of berries to the United States from the British Columbia area to make it possible to market fruit which otherwise could not be marketed as the result of a shortage of containers in that area. In other words if, as is suggested, the Americans are prepared to make containers available in which to ship