

This is just as important as the other, and I wish hon. members would listen. If he is called and not given the postponement—

—the question then arises as to whether or not he is essential to agriculture in the district.

If agricultural labour is needed in the district, he should be given an opportunity to place himself in a position where his services would be essential to agriculture on some other farm; or in the alternative to increase the production of a specific farm. The board could give a deferment for three months instead of "granting postponement until further notice" in order to give the man an opportunity of finding essential work.

This, read along with the other, indicates that the cases in which limited time should be given are those in which an effort is being made to distribute farm labour, not merely to retain it.

Mr. COLDWELL: Is that the district over which the board has control or the district in which the man resides?

Mr. GARDINER: There is no further definition given. These are the directions which have been issued, and it will be remembered that the boards have been asked to make any comments they wish, and those will be discussed. I would imagine it would be a different area in different places.

The next provision is now:

6. A person who may not have been employed in agriculture on March 23, 1942, but who has become engaged in agriculture since that time, and is shown to be essential to agriculture, may be considered for postponement on application if the merits of the case are established.

Mr. GRAYDON: Since what time?

Mr. GARDINER: This was issued on February 1.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is the case where the father buys a farm for the boy and makes him a farmer. Pretty dangerous.

Mr. GARDINER: I would rather recite the other type of case again, that it is for the boy who left the farm purposely to enter into a munitions factory, but now that food is considered more necessary in that community, he desires to come back. If he can establish these facts I think the board would be justified in taking action.

The next provision is:

7. Conscientious objectors, including Doukhobors, Mennonites and others, who receive postponement of military training until further notice and are agricultural workers should not be directed to report for alternative service so long as they are employed in essential work in agriculture.

8. Application for leave should be invited from agricultural workers engaged in alternative service, and such applications should be given favourable consideration.

It is felt that if the above principles are followed by all boards the increasing difficulties in maintaining essential farm production will be greatly alleviated.

Any comments and suggestions any board may wish to offer regarding the above principles will be appreciated.

That is signed by A. MacNamara, director of national selective service, and approved by the Minister of Labour.

Mr. GRAYDON: I should like to ask one question with regard to the dimensions of the areas mentioned there. That has a direct bearing on the whole question of the distribution of labour, because if it is confined to only the small area where the man resides, perhaps it will not meet the requirements that are so necessary. Possibly the minister might amplify that point.

Mr. GARDINER: Of course the minister would hope that this would be administered by the boards in a reasonable way, as I am sure it will.

There is just one other matter with which I wish to deal for a few moments, namely, the question, is price a limiting factor? That question has been discussed here from time to time, and the statement is frequently made that British and United States prices are higher than ours. Well, the statement could be made with equal truth that Australian and Argentine prices are lower than ours. For that reason I should like to place before the house for its consideration the fact that our position is not on all fours with either the United States or the British; neither is it on all fours with the Argentine or the Australian. We occupy a position somewhere in between. The United States and British position is affected by their dense population and by the nearness of Britain to the war itself. The position of the Argentine and Australia is affected by their distance from the places where the supplies are required. On the other hand we have a sparse population and large agricultural areas, and are located closer to the scene of battle than any of these other countries. Therefore our position is a little different.

I should like to remind hon. members that many things have been done by the government to assist the price position. Last year, as was stated the other day, we made a billion dollars available to the British government; and the fact that this amount of money was provided, whether it was used directly or indirectly, made it possible for us to dispose of our food products to Britain