

Meat Rationing

meat and of fats and oils, effective to-morrow. This decision will naturally necessitate a re-examination of our own policy.

Hon. members are aware that ever since the formation of the combined food board more than three years ago there has been a general understanding between the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada that each country would endeavour to make its best contribution to the common problems we have been facing. It has, of course, always been understood that each country must necessarily be its own judge of how best to implement that understanding.

In July last I announced our government's decision to resume the rationing of meat in order that Canada might make the fullest possible contribution to the needs of the United Kingdom and the continent of Europe, as we then saw them. I am satisfied that the world situation to-day, and as it will be during the coming months, is even more urgent and more desperate than appeared at that time.

Our rationing programme in Canada has made it possible to ship overseas during the past two months more meat and dairy products than we ever before supplied in a similar period of time, and this has been done without imposing any undue or unreasonable curtailment of domestic consumption.

We have not yet been officially advised of the United States announcement. It is my understanding that the United States will continue, through "set-aside" orders, to provide meat for overseas shipment in 1946 in an amount not less than that estimated for 1945. There are, however, important distinctions between the United States position and ours. The probable United States meat exports, although large in terms of tonnage, are not likely to be more than five per cent of their total available meat supplies. Our meat export programme in 1945, which we believe should be carried forward into 1946, calls for exports of nearly one-third of our total meat supplies and nearly one-half of our inspected meat supply. The United States, in exporting less than five per cent of its meat supplies, may be able to manage its programme through "set-aside" orders without rationing, and still be able to maintain fair distribution and fair prices. We are convinced however that in Canada we could not, without rationing, export between forty and fifty per cent of our federally inspected kill and maintain orderly distribution and hold our price ceilings.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

May I remind hon. members that the main purpose underlying our rationing policy is to enable Canada to take her full part in the attempt to avert or moderate one of the greatest human tragedies of all time.

I have much in mind a remarkable and moving debate which took place in the British House of Commons while I was in London. The people of the United Kingdom have gone through six long years of meagre and monotonous diet, and their rations this coming winter will be as low as or lower than they have been at any time since the outbreak of war. Yet four weeks ago members of all parties and all sections of the British House of Commons in the course of that debate were found urging the government, not only to use its influence to secure the maintenance and, if possible, an increase in food exports from North America to the continent of Europe, but also, if necessary, still further to deplete its own stocks and even reduce the rations in order to avert or lessen the extent of the appalling tragedy that is unfolding itself in Europe to-day.

The government feels that it will have the support of all groups in this house, and all sections of the Canadian people, in maintaining those policies which will make it possible for us to continue our best endeavours to meet the perilous situation which confronts Europe as winter sets in. With all considerations in mind, it is the government's intention to continue its rationing programme until such time as it may feel justified in adopting other measures.

CIVIL SERVICE

WAR DUTIES SUPPLEMENTS—WAGES AND SALARIES CONTROL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. GORDON B. ISNOR (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day are called I should like to address a question to the government, more particularly to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley) to whom I sent an enlarged note on the subject of this inquiry. As a business man operating retail stores I have received many inquiries. I hold in my hand some of the reports which have appeared during the past week about the payment of war duties supplements to civil servants. Many people are interpreting these to indicate that the government itself is not following the principle of wage and salary control—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. ISNOR: —that it is imposing on private employers.