

men are most important in assisting our producers to improve their standards of production, and they should be properly remunerated for so doing.

It is quite evident that with proper national planning and international arrangements the nation may have an economy of abundance with fair remuneration to all. I should like to have that point emphasized now, because many of our producers who have done such a magnificent job during the war years are to-day in great fear and doubt. They do not want to be caught by depression and lower prices as they were in the past, and many of them talk about quitting now, while prices are fair and they can probably get out with reasonable prices for their equipment and what stock they have. It is surprising how many people, especially in western Canada, are possessed with that viewpoint to-day. Therefore I think that if the minister would say now what the government's plans are and what has been done to assure the agricultural producers of Canada future markets and fair and reasonable price returns it would be of great assistance to those producers. Before we return to another session, the most efficient of these people will be laying plans for next year's production. I trust that whatever proposals are decided on will be upon some basis of parity, not forgetting that our producers of timber and our manufacturers of textiles and other articles are not to-day being held down in the matter of price as are the agricultural producers. Figures have been given on several occasions about the great percentage of our timber production which is going to the southern market, and at a much handsomer price than is paid in Canada. That in turn has increased our building costs as much, in many cases, as fifty per cent. Those are the figures of experts in our government departments. I trust that, whatever is done for agriculture, these facts will be kept in mind, and that farmers will be given a reasonable break to assure them remuneration which is fair in relation to that received in other vocations in this country to-day.

I repeat that it is most important that our producers, especially of grain and live stock, should be given some lead at this time as to what they may expect, at least for next year's production, and it will be beneficial if they could be given some idea as to what they may expect in this matter in the next few years.

If the minister can do that now, it will save a number of questions on several other items as we come to them, besides being beneficial to the producers of this country.

[Mr. J. A. Ross.]

Mr. WRIGHT: I am going to offer no excuse for taking up some of the time of the committee to discuss agriculture. Over two months and a half of this session have passed, and this is the first opportunity which the government has given to the house to discuss this matter. Agriculture is such an important phase of Canadian economic life that we might well have had an opportunity at an earlier stage to discuss some of its problems.

There are people who say that agriculture has not many problems to face at this time, that agriculturists are receiving reasonable prices for their products and that they are satisfied. However, I think we can easily prove that there is a great deal of misgiving among farmers with respect to the future. We need more agricultural production in Canada and throughout the world than at any time during the war. In Canada, Great Britain and the United States governments endeavoured during the war years to get an increase in agricultural production, and they used various means, including subsidies and advertising urging farmers to produce, to accomplish this purpose. Agricultural production is now needed to a greater extent than ever, if we are to believe the reports which are coming out of Europe, and the statements made by the Prime Minister the other day upon his return from Great Britain, when he told us that during this winter probably twenty million Europeans will be on starvation rations and hundreds of thousands will die of starvation during the next six months. So that production is essential at this time.

The agricultural industry of Canada did a very good job during the war. The increase was due, I believe, largely to three reasons: First, the desire of the farmers to do their share in the war, to see that production was sufficient to meet the needs during the war period. They did a good job, despite the fact that they were short of help and equipment. In respect of several agricultural products they doubled their production. This achievement was due largely to the individual farmer, to the man and woman on the farm who went out and milked a few extra cows, who kept a few extra hens, who took on these extra jobs feeling that that was their duty and their share in the war effort. The second reason for increased production of agricultural products was that nature was very good to us during the war years. In 1942 we had probably the largest agricultural production ever known in the dominion, thanks to a bountiful nature. We had plenty of rainfall. The third reason, in my opinion, was the stabilized prices which agriculture has received for its products during