

FOOD CONTROL PROBLEMS.

Address by W. J. HANNA, K. C., Food Controller for Canada.

In an address in Montreal at a meeting of the Housewives' League, Hon. Mr. Hanna said that there were no politics in the Department of Food Control from one end to the other and that there would be none. Referring to what had been done to date, the Food Controller stated that he was seeking power to require all wholesale fruit and vegetable dealers selling east of Port Arthur and Fort William to take out licenses to do business. Returns would be required from such licensed dealers showing all sales and profits and the difference between the cost and selling price would not be permitted to exceed a reasonable and moderate amount. The situation in the West, so far as the wholesale trade was concerned, was being thoroughly investigated on the spot by representatives of the Food Controller.

Mr. Hanna said that the apple market was in a very different position to-day from what it had been two years ago. In western Quebec and Ontario the crop was not more than 15 per cent of normal. In Nova Scotia the crop was large but owing to the embargo on apples into the United Kingdom the growers were deprived of their usual market. With the shortage of apples in Central Canada arose the necessity of bringing the crop from the Maritime Provinces to where apples were needed. This involved securing 4,000 extra cars as none had been used for this purpose in forty years. Arrangements had been made by which these apples were delivered to the retailers and even to the consumers, direct from the cars, in order to avoid unnecessary handling. The business of the Food Controller was to use the existing facilities and experience of those engaged in the various trades, for the benefit of the consuming public.

The crop of potatoes this year was very large, said Mr. Hanna, the excess above normal amounting to a hundred million bushels in the United States and about ten millions in Canada. With the exception of Quebec and part of New Brunswick where rot was prevalent, the crop was evenly distributed over the Dominion. It was a difficult matter to fix an arbitrary price, however, for the potato market next spring would be in a different position from what it was to-day, and moreover, if the

producer did not get back the cost of production he would not replant potatoes, with the result that there would be as great a scarcity in 1918 as there was in 1916.

"Milk looks easy," said Mr. Hanna, "but it is really one of the most difficult questions of all. Unless Mr. Hoover and I can work out some plan of direct co-operation, I do not see how we can meet the situation that has arisen." Two years ago the market for milk consisted in supplying householders and butter and cheese factories. These factories were giving a fair return on their investments when cheese was selling at 13 cents to 17 cents a pound. It took ten pounds of milk to make a pound of cheese. To-day cheese was bringing over 21 cents and milk about \$2 per 100 pounds. A new factor had entered into the situation, namely the evaporated milk manufacturer. The demand for milk in this convenient form had grown from very small proportions to a huge trade to supply the overseas army. Their present requirements were quite four times what they were hitherto and to obtain supplies they were willing to pay any price for milk. At the moment there was an offer extending from Brockville to the Bay of Fundy to pay 3½ cents a pound as compared with the regular price of 2 cents on the 15th of this month. It required 100 pounds of milk to make four pounds of butter, and the moment the factories were obliged to pay \$3.50 per hundred pounds for milk, the retail price of butter would jump to 87½ cents a pound.

"This situation requires drastic action," said the Food Controller. "We are meeting the farmers and dairymen. I have not much sympathy in times like these for men who are not prepared to stop when they have made a fair profit. But I am not afraid of the verdict of the dairymen. They will be willing to provide our boys and girls with the nourishment that is necessary for them."

Before fixing the price of bread it had first been necessary to set a price for wheat, he said. That had been done some time ago and the last ten days had been devoted to the question of flour. All the mills with a fifty barrel a day capacity were required to register, and state their costs and returns to the last cent. No mill is to receive