

on the seasonal aspects and timeliness of the information given. I have not had the privilege of reading or hearing all of this information—I know about some of it—but I believe it is along the line which the hon. member has mentioned, namely that when certain things are happening on the farm in a particular season, that is what is talked about on the radio, with the idea of giving assistance to persons who are farming in the different sections.

Mr. ROWE: I have listened to a number of these broadcasts, as no doubt the minister has also; but they have to do chiefly with marketing and market reports. I believe an extension of this service would be well justified by what has been done in this regard, and when other reductions of expenditure are made, it could be carried on economically—more so than by the provision of much of the literature which is being sent out. I suggest that it be encouraged.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Inasmuch as we are dealing with the increase of production, which I consider a vital matter at the present time, I would urge upon the minister the advisability of looking to the increase of our supply of sugar. No one would have imagined a year ago that we would be in anything like the desperate condition in which we feel ourselves to be to-day; most people, looking back, would say, "Who would have thought it?" It is just as possible that we shall be in an unpredictably serious position a year from now. One of the respects in which I think we ought to be looking into the future is the matter of preparing for our sugar supply.

Canada to-day is, relatively speaking, in a precarious position as regards sugar. If I understand the situation aright, we are dependent in large measure for our sugar upon supplies which come across the water. If for any reason we should lose control of the seas for a time we should be in a grave position in the matter of sugar. That danger is altogether avoidable owing to the fact that we in Canada are capable of developing to the point where we can provide our own sugar needs. Consequently, if we should find ourselves suffering a sugar shortage, there would be no small amount of condemnation coming to those individuals who had neglected to look into the future and guard against such mishap. In 1938 Canada consumed 1,050,135,014 pounds of sugar. Of that 907,121,167 pounds were cane and only 143,013,847 were beet. Every single pound of that sugar consumed could have been beet sugar. Consider the advantage that would have meant to the whole of our Canadian economy.

[Mr. Gardiner.]

May I discuss something that has troubled nearly all hon. members. The exchange value of our money depends upon our balance of trade; the more goods we buy from outside the more danger there is of our dollar being at adverse exchange. Since that is so, obviously if we consume cane sugar obtained from outside instead of beet sugar produced within, we are endangering our exchange position, and that at a time when there are many things which perforce we must buy from outside, mainly munitions of one kind or another. And our needs are likely to increase rather than to decrease in that respect as the days go by.

Of course, we could not modify our ways soon enough to bring about the desirable change in a short time, but when we remember that we are probably in for a long war, we can see it certainly would be the part of wisdom to prepare for such a protracted struggle. One of the matters we need to look to is sugar.

But there is something else we hear a great deal about in this house. Inflation has been written on every square inch of the walls of this building as a result of the industrious efforts of past ministers of finance, and our newspapers have simply blazoned it from one end of the country to the other. I wonder how many of those who talk about inflation realize that we can have inflation through scarcity of goods.

The CHAIRMAN: I regret having to interrupt the hon. member, but his line of thought and discussion is not strictly relevant to the item under consideration.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Do I understand that we are discussing the question of an increase in production in Canada?

The CHAIRMAN: But inflation is so remote from production, except along the theories of the hon. gentleman, that I fear I am obliged to ask him to keep a little closer to the item before us.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman; I shall find that easy, because I have just finished talking about inflation. I mentioned inflation merely to point out that it can be caused through a shortage of production. If anything happened to Canada's sugar supply there would be a rise in the price of sugar in Canada and that would start an inflationary movement. The danger is particularly grave inasmuch as we are experiencing a falling off in our foreign markets. Whole countries that have been good customers of ours are being destroyed, and there must be alarm in the hearts of all those who have to do with our trade. Up to the