

Farm Prices

I can quite readily understand how a bill like this could be used to make Canada more self-sufficient.

Mr. GARDINER: Is that what you wish to have done?

Mr. BLACKMORE: Perhaps the minister would like me to make a pronouncement so that the Liberals could use it. I know he would. I have propounded certain questions—

Mr. GARDINER: I am not afraid to say what I think about it. What do you think about it?

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am glad the minister is not afraid; and I am not afraid to say what I think about it. But I will say it in a way which cannot be distorted on some remote platform. I am going to say that in a general way it is a dangerous and an uneconomical situation for any country to be dependent upon external sources for the products it needs to support the lives of its people. The minister will readily get that. Time and time again I have advocated a greater beet sugar production in Canada, thereby laying down a principle which I hold to be completely sound. I think I have answered the minister, and he will understand.

Mr. GARDINER: You are in favour of making the country self-sustaining.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I am in favour of the principle I have just laid down by implication. If this Bill is sincerely applied it will aid greatly in the attainment of that desire, but we shall have to deal with the serious problem of where the money is to come from. An amount of \$200,000,000 will not begin to maintain prices where they ought to be. Prices in 1929 and 1927 were not high enough to give the agricultural population of Canada their fair share of the national income. I think every one in this house will agree that what the hon. member for Halton (Mr. Cleaver) said this afternoon—I congratulate him upon saying it—is applicable to this situation.

From 1905, when I first began to take an interest in these matters, down to the present time, the farmers of Canada have not had a fair deal. Their situation has been getting worse. Their situation was not happy in 1927, 1928 and 1929 when prices were good. If the government are to undertake to correct a situation similar to that which existed in 1932, if they are to attempt to support prices, they will need much more than \$200,000,000. If the country should fall upon evil days, such as we had from 1930 to 1935, the amount of money which the people could pay in taxes would not be very great, and one can imagine

[Mr. Blackmore.]

the clamour that would be raised against the taxation which would be necessary to supply even \$200,000,000.

I believe that all thoughtful members will be impressed with the need of a careful examination of the question of where the money is to come from. It must not be taxed from the Canadian economy because the Canadian economy just will not stand it. If the sponsors and drafters of this bill really mean to put it through, if it is not just a means of deceiving the people, then they must be sure that they have a source of money which will yield much more than \$200,000,000 and which will not constitute a tax burden on the Canadian people over and above what they are called upon to endure.

Having said that, I have just one more statement to make. If the object of the bill—I imagine the minister proposes to tell me this in a minute or two—is to grant the Canadian farmer an adequate income, I suggest that it is a matter of considerable importance that the minister define what, in his opinion, constitutes adequate. There are altogether too many wage-earners and income earners in Canada who are getting less than \$1,000 a year. There is a scandalously large number of Canadian people receiving less than \$500 a year to support their families. The other day the Prime Minister gave us some figures which have an impressing bearing on that statement.

What is adequate to-day? Does it mean that when the average farmer gets done with his year's work he will have a \$500 balance in his favour? Does it mean that he will have a \$2,500 balance in his favour? What will be in the minds of the men who are to determine what that adequate income shall be and who, therefore, are to determine what the prices shall be which the farmer will receive and what the prices shall be which he must pay for the items that enter into his cost of production?

I think I have indicated the line along which I desire a considerable amount of information. May I say once more that I support the principle of this bill in so far as its objectives are concerned, namely, the introduction and maintenance of equitable and suitable prices for agricultural products throughout this country. I support that principle, but I oppose the principle of the technique or the method by which that objective is to be attained, namely, the levying of a tax burden upon the Canadian people.

The taxation structure upon the Canadian people is altogether too destructive right now and it must be relaxed. Otherwise such a thing as freedom will leave the shores of this country if it has not already done so. To