

This statement fully understood may have no bad effect, but not fully understood it may give an impression in many quarters outside of Canada that we in Canada are suffering for lack of sufficient food for our own people and for that reason are not able to do our share in the war effort. I am sure no hon. member is desirous of having that impression go abroad, partly because of the assurance it might give to our enemies, and partly because of the difficulty it might create for those who are arranging the food supplies for the nations with which we are associated in the war. I would emphasize again the fact that never before in the history of this country has there been such a large tonnage of foodstuffs produced in Canada as is being produced at the present time. I am not saying that never before have we received as much for the produce of our farms, but I might even make that statement, and probably will before I have concluded my remarks. But at the moment what I am emphasizing is that in actual production of food, apart altogether from the price received for it by farmers, a greater tonnage is being produced now than at any previous time in the history of our country.

The question may be asked, how have we arrived at that position? We have done so because of the efforts put forth by primary producers in agriculture to meet the requisitions made upon them from time to time by the government of this country.

Here I should like to reply to statements of those who say that no direction has been given to the farmers. It would appear that the only persons who feel that way are those who do not occupy farms. We are being told from time to time, in periodicals and otherwise, that no direction has been given to our people. But the remarkable thing is that every year since the war began our tonnage of production has increased by leaps and bounds, and in every year since the war started we have met the objectives which have been set for our people at the beginning of the production season. Farmers seemed to know what they were being asked to do; they applied the necessary energy to the task and got the results. This is my reply to those who say there has been no plan, no direction, that nothing has been made known to the farmers generally to lead them to produce the things that are needed in the war effort.

In order to make sure that this information would go out to the farmers the government set up at the beginning of the war an agricultural war supplies committee. That committee or board has functioned since the beginning of the war. Nine conferences

[Mr. Gardiner.]

have been held, attended by representatives of provincial governments and of farm organizations throughout Canada. At every one of these conferences, held not later than December in each year preceding the year in which the crop was to be grown, these matters were fully discussed with provincial authorities and representatives of farm organizations. The first gathering was held in the early winter of 1939. The provincial representatives then went back and organized fully the provincial departments of agriculture, and some of them went out and organized farm groups, municipalities and counties, to assist in giving the necessary information to the farmers in the different sections of their province. Finally in December of this year we had a meeting at which we were able to take into consideration not only the requirements from agriculture in this country but the requirements from agriculture in the great country in the south, which joined in the war in the early winter of 1941. Having set up this board, we then entered into agreements or understandings with the countries fighting on our side. The first agreements naturally were made with Great Britain. It will be recalled by hon. members that we entered the war along with Britain, in association with France. In the spring of 1940 France dropped out, and during the greater part of 1940 and 1941 Great Britain, with her dominions, stood alone in the war effort against the axis powers. During that period of time we entered into agreements with the British government, and made known the terms of those agreements to the farmers long in advance of their spring operations, emphasizing the importance of producing the amounts necessary in order that our own people and the people of Britain might be fed.

That was the second effort put forth in order to get production. We made an early announcement of policy. The other day I picked up a farm publication issued in Canada, edited by a man who visits the department perhaps more than any other publisher in Canada, and I was surprised to read therein that the farm policy for last year on acreage reduction was announced on the last day of the session. I directed attention to the fact that the legislation having to do with acreage reduction last year was introduced in this house on March 9 and was finally assented to on March 27.

I recite this only in order to indicate that the statement is made in spite of the fact that we have announced our policies in November and December of the year preceding the seeding; in spite of the fact that our legislation has been brought down early in the session, and in spite