

for them. As I say, many years ago this matter was brought up, looked into and turned down.

I am entirely in accord with what the hon. member for Simcoe East has said, but the remedy is not to do it by way of a committee. You would not be curing an evil, you would be perpetrating a worse evil. We who represent the common people would not be heard at all; it would all be done in the committee. Many private members would not have even a chance to be on these committees unless they had party affiliations. A worse evil would be created than if we have to spend a few days extra here listening to Tom Jones talking about something in which we are not particularly interested. The price Tom Jones has to pay for that is that he has to sit and listen to me while I am talking, but that is part of democratic government.

Mr. DUPUIS: Mr. Chairman, I am in duty bound to ask the indulgence of hon. members of this committee while I say a few words about an urgent matter which seriously affects our farming community, and which comes under this item. It has to do with the restriction imposed by the wartime prices and trade board which forbids the ordinary farmer to sell his hogs in cuts on the local market unless he first obtains a licence to do so. I have discussed this matter with some of the officials of the board and recently with the hon. Minister of Finance, who seemed sympathetic. But since the matter has not yet been settled, I think the situation should be made public. But first I want to say publicly how much we appreciate the patience of the Minister of Finance in listening to us, despite the very heavy burden he has to carry and does carry so successfully.

This is a matter which concerns all the rural members representing at least eastern Ontario, Quebec and the maritimes, and I was told just a few moments ago that the same situation obtains in the west. Since the question has not yet been settled, I want to summarize the situation publicly in this house, which has the right to settle this acute question. I am bringing this matter up here on behalf of bona fide farmers who have been in the habit of selling hogs in cuts on the local market once or twice a week. These farmers, on account of the restriction imposed by the wartime prices and trade board, are now prevented from doing so unless they first obtain a licence from the board.

I, jointly with several other members representing rural districts of eastern Ontario,

[Mr. Neill.]

Quebec and the maritimes, have made a fairly complete investigation into the matter, and our findings are these:

The local market business is generally left to the farmers' wives who are in charge of raising poultry, eggs and hogs, which they bring weekly to the market to make money to pay the family's ordinary expenditures. They sell direct to the consumers, who prefer to buy fresh meat from the producers. Since they do not raise hogs in large quantity, they are not interested in selling to the abattoirs, because they have found by experience that the abattoirs have graded their hogs in a lower grade, with a consequent loss of money to the farmers' wives. This is probably owing to the fact that the farmers have not time to specialize in the proper grading of the hogs. So that if the licence is refused them, they will surely abandon the raising of hogs altogether. We are told that the production of hogs by these farmers amounts to approximately 100,000 hogs a year.

It seems clear to us that if the proper means to grant licences to these farmers are not taken, there will be a shortage of 100,000 hogs for local consumption, which the packing plant will be bound to supply to city consumers. It is evident that consumers must be supplied with meat and the only way to solve that problem is to allow these farmers to sell on the local market. In this way the packing plants will have just that much more at their disposal to supply the needs of our armies and those of our allies.

There are many ways of distributing these licences to the farmers. A large poster could be placed prominently in every local market, stating how the licences can be obtained. The clerk of the market or government inspector could be charged with the distribution of these licences.

The farmers are satisfied to collect ration coupons from the buyer. These coupons could be handed over to the clerk of the market or to the government inspector. In this way, not only could we contribute to sending a larger quantity of classified hogs overseas, but we would also prevent an injustice from being perpetrated against these farmers.

That is why I think this question is urgent, and why I have felt it my duty to bring it before the committee, so that it may receive immediate attention with a view to an early solution.

Mr. ILSLEY: As the hon. member says, he has discussed this matter with me on two or three occasions and, I think, with the officials of the wartime prices and trade