

Mention is made in the speech from the throne of a joint committee to be set up by the United States and Canada to deal with agriculture. In their speeches both the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the leader of the opposition (Mr. Graydon) mentioned the food problem. It is a matter which has become of great importance and it is causing grave concern. I believe we have barely touched upon the food problem which confronts not only the north American continent but all our allies, and the matter warrants more attention than has so far been given to it. All the facts of the situation should be made clear. Many people in this country have not realized that food is required not only for the Canadian people, for our fighting men and women, but for all our fighting allies.

From 1939 up until some time last year the first necessity was for guns, tanks, aeroplanes and other military supplies. The extent to which we have been successful in regard to these was revealed in the speech made by the Prime Minister. I commend to the study of every hon. member of the house the figures which he gave. Sometimes I think that we are not proud enough of the tremendous contribution which is being made by the Canadian people to our allies and to help the bringing about of victory. The important necessity this year is for food. There is a challenge to Canada's fertile plains to provide the food quotas for victory. Although over 100,000 men have left the farms to go into the various services, last year our farmers produced greater crops than in the year previous, and for this some commendation is due them.

I should like to take a moment or two of the time of the house to refer to the great task and the high responsibility which Great Britain has undertaken; it has not been touched upon so far in this debate. First of all Great Britain has her own people and troops to feed and clothe. Her next responsibility is the hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war which were taken in Libya. The people in the Libyan cities which she has taken over must be provided with the necessary food. On top of this, quantities of food have been sent to Russia. I do not think it is generally known that butter left this north American continent last year for the soldiers in Russia. We all know the civilian population of Russia have been denying themselves every possible morsel of food in order that their soldiers may be taken care of. Let us not overlook the fact that many if not all the Russian granaries have been in the hands of the nazis for over a year. Great Britain has also been called upon to

[Mr. Reid.]

send wheat and other food supplies to the people of India out of her own meagre supply.

I have not the figures of the present food requirements of the Canadian navy, army and air force, but the other day I saw some figures in the press with regard to the food requirements of the United States army. I know it will surprise you, Mr. Speaker, as it did me to learn that it takes over 15,000,000 pounds of food daily to feed the army of the United States. What I have just outlined is a challenging problem of itself; but there is something more: there is the spectre of famine which is haunting every country in Europe. All these peoples are looking to the fertile plains of the north American continent for food.

These facts should be placed more plainly before the people of this country. Tell our people what will be required this year, and I am sure they will gladly respond. Can we meet this challenge? I say yes, we can meet it, but not in the way we have been endeavoring to meet it in the past year. Questions have been asked regarding a food ministry. I propose that a food ministry be set up, not next week or next year, but right now. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, to hon. members and particularly to the government that the present Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) be made the head of that food ministry. But should he be given this power and authority, his efforts would be greatly thwarted did we not also give him the power to fix the prices of farm products.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Page Mr. Donald Gordon.

Mr. REID: I am not going to make an attack on the wartime prices and trade board at this time. I criticized the board at the last session, and I may have plenty to say before this session is over. I do not want the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley) or any other member to accuse me of attacking Donald Gordon or the wartime prices and trade board, except in this one particular. I object to the method by which they have endeavoured to handle the farmer and farm prices.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Is that a promise or a threat?

Mr. REID: Both. Everyone realizes that there must be control of prices and rationing, but to place under the wartime prices and trade board the fixing of farm prices is entirely wrong. I can imagine the cry that would go up from some in this country if farmers were chosen to handle the Bank of Canada and