

groceries and meats are going up without any limit. The situation has become so serious—I often wonder whether we realize how serious it is—that certain provinces of the dominion have had to step into the breach because the dominion government would not do so. Surely we should have some kind of leadership which would not leave the whole problem of dominion agriculture to the provinces alone.

I make this suggestion to the government, although I think it should have come from the government, and I am amazed that they did not put it forward as soon as they came into this house last Monday. In view of the seriousness of the agricultural problem, affecting as it does the whole nature and extent of our war effort in Canada and our help to Britain, a select special committee on agriculture of the House of Commons should be formed by the government and the whole matter brought before that committee, in order to see whether some solution cannot be found of one of Canada's major problems. I hope this constructive suggestion will be adopted.

Since we left here last December there has been a conference.

Mr. HOMUTH: Just the start of one.

Mr. GRAYDON: The hon. member for Waterloo South (Mr. Homuth) says they just got started. I did not happen to be here when the conference was going on. I read something about it, and I was not very much astonished that it did not go further. One of the newspapers referred to the Sirois report as "the dominion government's baby." I am not going to discuss that point because I have no knowledge of it; but if it was the dominion government's baby it did not have a very good start in life. First of all, both its parents were Liberals. In addition, it was brought into being in a Liberal household, and tended and nursed by Liberal doctors. During its frail life it showed signs of an early demise, until it met a violent death at the hands of another Liberal in its own household. More than that, when finally the baby was buried there was a private Liberal funeral; none of the neighbours were invited in. The only difference between the private funeral in this case and an ordinary private funeral is, that the neighbours had to be brought in to pay part of the bill, and it amounted to over half a million dollars. With regard to the Sirois report, whether it was good or bad, there was a lamentable lack of leadership as far as the Liberal party, dominion and provincial, were concerned.

At the end of this conference—and this is the only reason why I have brought up the matter—the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley) made some sort of threat. It may not have been exactly a threat, but in any event it

looked suspiciously like one at the time. Maybe he felt justified in making it, but I think he should not have lost too much time in clarifying his meaning. At the end of the conference he made the statement that there was a possibility, in view of the report not having been adopted or any agreement reached upon its provisions, of an invasion, in some directions, of provincial fields of taxation.

It seems to me that the minister owes it to parliament to clarify as quickly as possible what he really meant by "an invasion of provincial fields of taxation."

Another angle I want to touch upon while I am speaking about the failure of leadership on the part of the government, is the matter of taking the census in Canada. It has been mentioned before, and I do not want to labour the subject. But I should like to point out what I regard as a cogent consideration. If the census is a peace-time affair, I think we should not have it at all; but if it is a war-time measure, then by all means let it be done on a non-partisan basis. Unless my recollection is entirely wrong, I remember the Prime Minister rising in his place and saying, in one of his blazes of oratory—and it was an excellent speech—that as regards the war effort of Canada, there would never be the slightest flavour of partisanship as far as he was concerned. I believe he even dared his own supporters—and as I recollect it, some of them accepted the challenge—to banish partisanship as long as he was head of the government. Well, we do not object if it so happens that all the best men for cabinet timber belong to the Liberal party. Let them carry on the war and war-time activities. I am not going to object to that. But when it comes to the question of a war-time measure such as the census—and it must be so regarded or it surely would not be carried on—let us have it on a non-partisan basis, the same as in national registration.

Let me at this point bring up this business of national registration. Many people are wondering about it. I remember the Prime Minister, when the national resources mobilization bill was brought in, saying in this house—I thought he overdid the point a little—"I would to God that we had power tonight to deal with the matters which this bill envisages." Well, the power was given him on that June night. In August that registration was taken. I believe a good job was made of it, and I am making no objection at all to that. The difficulty is that it has been used for one thing and one thing only, which is to separate men of twenty-one to twenty-four years old from the rest of the population and bring them into the thirty-day training camps. I believe we expected more than that from