

Meat—Suspension of Rationing

convoys and we hunted the submarine. We have stretched our coverage far beyond our own shores, and in conjunction with our Canadian navy have assumed responsibility for the northwest Atlantic. Our land planes and amphibians and flying boats sweep the north Atlantic from Labrador to Greenland and beyond. And lastly, farther overseas we have contributed thousands of our men to the global war. We are in Iceland. We are in the Hebrides. We are in Burma. We are in India. We are in Egypt. We are in Italy. We are nightly over Europe. We are attacking and beating Germany in the very heart of nazi might. This is what Canada is doing in the air war.

Canada is doing her share equal to that of any nation of the commonwealth, and in proportion to its population, equal to that of any of its allies.

That is what the world should realize.

That is what the people of Canada should know.

Canada has a right to be proud of its air war.

Item stands.

Progress reported.

MEAT

SUSPENSION OF RATIONING—STATEMENT OF
PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANT TO THE
MINISTER OF FINANCE

Mr. D. C. ABBOTT (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, with the permission of the house I should like to make a statement with respect to meat rationing.

Three weeks ago the question of the need for continuing meat rationing was raised in the House of Commons and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley) stated that the whole question would be reviewed in the light of current conditions.

The basic reasons for meat rationing in Canada should be clearly understood. Our production of meat has always been ample for our domestic requirements. The reasons for meat rationing were to create an increased exportable surplus to meet the urgent and essential requirements of the United Kingdom and to ensure equitable distribution of the supplies remaining in Canada. May I point out that our purpose is not only to help to feed the population of the United Kingdom but also the total armed forces supplied through the United Kingdom which include all the Canadian forces overseas. We intend to continue to meet these urgent and essential requirements.

[Mr. Power.]

During recent weeks, however, unusually large surpluses of meat have been developing in Canada. The mere existence of such surpluses would not be a good reason for suspending rationing provided that such surpluses could be moved to seaboard and overseas.

A careful review of the present position has satisfied the government that for the time being the excess supply of meat coming to market, over and above the amount needed to meet domestic requirements at the present rate of consumption, is in excess of our physical capacity to move it into export channels, and that the sensible and proper course to take is temporarily to suspend meat rationing.

The facts can be summarized briefly, as follows:

1. There have been unusually heavy marketings of all types of live stock during recent months, and it is expected that heavy marketings will continue for the next two or three months. During the first eight weeks of 1944 the inspected packing plants in Canada have slaughtered 780,000 more hogs, 50,000 more cattle, 10,000 more calves and 30,000 more sheep and lambs than in the corresponding weeks of 1943. These figures represent an increase over 1943 of eighty per cent in hogs, fifty per cent in cattle, twenty per cent in calves and thirty-five per cent in sheep and lambs. It has been only with the greatest difficulty that the packing plants have been able physically to handle this great increase in volume.

2. As a result of these very heavy runs of live stock the storage and transportation facilities have become acutely congested. The latest available statistics indicate that there are over 102,000,000 pounds of meat in cold storage which is nearly twice as much as at this time a year ago and 65 per cent greater than is normal at this time of year. In addition to meat storage we have to provide for the cold storage of other important products. There is at present no reserve of cold storage space to take care of any unforeseen backing up due to unpreventable delays in shipping.

3. Not only are we having a continuance of heavy live stock marketings and an acute congestion of storage space, but we are also faced with limitations on our physical capacity to move meat to seaboard and overseas. During the past eight weeks we have moved record quantities overseas—more than we have ever moved in a similar two-month period. If everything moved with clock-like precision we believe we might just be able to handle the present volume of product, but with no reserve of storage space and with a continued