

Mr. BLACKMORE: Has not the minister paid a wheat acreage reduction bonus?

Mr. GARDINER: Not to reduce production; it was to increase production—and it did increase it.

Mr. BLACKMORE: Oh, this is a most interesting kind of reasoning. It must be unique. One ordinarily supposes that if you pay a man to keep a certain area out of production, it would decrease production.

Mr. GARDINER: He was not paid to keep it out of production; he was paid to take it out of wheat, and put it into something else.

Mr. BLACKMORE: What would happen if we had a surplus of everything?

Mr. GARDINER: He would change to something else.

Mr. BLACKMORE: The minister is thinking along a profitable line. If he would keep along that line, I would point out to him in a very few minutes how without any serious effort at all we can produce of most things more than Canadians can consume, and more than we can sell to the peoples of the world. I shall refer, for example, to my favourite subject of sugar.

Mr. GARDINER: Do not start on that.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I do not propose to start on it; but it is a good thing for the minister to bear such things as this in mind. Let him bear in mind that the total consumption of sugar in Canada to-day could be produced in Alberta alone, south of Calgary, without seriously affecting wheat production. That is one of the things we have to face.

I shall just refer to one or two others which occur to me. Take the production of alcohol. Everyone in Canada must have wondered why we have had to have a shortage of gasoline, and why we could not produce alcohol for fuel purposes. Surely everyone has wondered why it is we have been so careful not to produce freely of synthetic rubber, notwithstanding the fact that apparently we have an ideal set-up for such production.

Surely these examples are enough to indicate the potential capacity of Canada in connection with agricultural products. And those potential capacities will be opened up, if this bill is sincerely administered. I am not saying that it will be sincerely administered. I do not know. It may be administered somewhat as the meat board was administered this year in connection with beef in Alberta. That, of course, would be an entirely different matter.

But if it is sincerely administered, as the

wording of the bill would suggest, then this bill will stimulate agricultural production from coast to coast in Canada in a way which I believe will constitute a genuine embarrassment to everyone who persists in thinking in terms of scarcity. The question now ought to be raised: What would we do with these surpluses? Would we destroy them, or forbid further production, or give them away? How would we pay for them? All these questions have to be asked.

I am wondering this: As a result of the application of the principles of this bill in maintaining a floor price, are prices to be raised to the consumer? For example, supposing we see fit to pay, we will say, ten cents a dozen on eggs, so as to put a floor under the price of that commodity, would the ten cents be charged to the consumer? If it would not, that would help. But suppose the government raised the price from twenty cents to thirty cents a dozen, paid the difference of ten cents a dozen, and then charged the consumer thirty cents, when the consumer could otherwise have bought them for twenty cents from the producer. The result of this, of course, would be a matter which should be given consideration, before we plunge too far into it.

Another matter which I suggest should be considered at this stage, is this: Is it the intention to make Canada more self-sufficient, or to leave Canada more or less non-self-sufficient, as it is at present? That is, is this bill intended to be applied so as to cause the people of Canada to produce successfully certain agricultural products which at the present time it might appear could more profitably be imported from abroad?

Let us suppose we are dealing with butter. Would the object be to raise the price of butter to producers in Canada, so that it would not be profitable for anyone to import New Zealand butter, thereby tending to shut out the New Zealand product? I give this just as illustration. Would that be the general idea? Would the idea be to raise the price of wool to producers in Canada to the point where it would pay the Canadian wool grower so well to produce wool that the country would produce all our requirements of that commodity? These serve as an illustration of the point I have in mind.

I think the government has to decide definitely, before long, whether it proposes to make Canada a more and more self-sufficient country, or a country more and more dependent upon foreign trade. If it does not make a definite decision in this respect, then its policies will be at variance with each other, and there will be a lack of consistency in the moves the government makes.