

complain of the attitude of the divisional boards with respect to the drafting of men for Canada's army, but in my province of Saskatchewan there has been a total disregard of the requirements of agriculture or of the consequences of depleting the farms of farm labour. In many instances the last son of an aged and decrepit father has been drafted. The only remaining worker on the farm has been drafted, and I personally know of farms which will not be producing to capacity this year in grain, hogs, cattle, cream, eggs and other farm products.

I am not concerned with the number of postponements or the number who have been called up for service in Saskatchewan. I see an attempt made in the daily press of that province to excuse the actions of the divisional boards by quoting these figures. I am only concerned with the facts as I find them. I find families of three and four sons, none of whom has yet been called from the farm in that province, and then I find a last surviving worker on the farm taken off the farm, with the result that production will be slowed up this spring. When I find that, I am concerned in the work of that board. I am going to quote one instance.

I pleaded four times for this particular young man, by telephone to the divisional board, by two letters and by personal interview, and the edict of the board was that this man must go. The farmer happens to be a deformed, dwarfed, crippled man from his birth. He earned his living during most of his life by keeping books in a general store in which he had a financial interest. The store was sold, and he bought a farm and employed his son-in-law, a neighbouring farmer, and a very fine farmer indeed. He entered into agreement with his son-in-law to come and operate and manage the farm. I am referring to this son-in-law being taken from the farm on which there remained only a deformed, dwarfed, crippled man. I have another appeal from him to-day, a letter again requesting that this son-in-law be permitted to return to the farm; otherwise the farm will not be operated this spring. I submit that the production of food is a very important matter in the winning of the war. I am supported in this belief by a little excerpt of information that came to my office this morning headed, "Hoover on food problems." The ex-president of the United States, before a meeting of industrialists, made a speech in the city of New York on January 21, in which he dealt with the question of the food problem as it

[Mr. Gregory.]

affects the united nations. I am going to quote four short excerpts from Mr. Hoover's speech on that occasion:

Food supply has now become secondary only to military operations in determining the outcome of the war. And it will take first place in saving the world from anarchy after the war.

Again:

The burden of furnishing food supplies to the united nations now and to a starving world after the war rests largely upon the American and Canadian farmer.

Again:

Agriculture simply must be envisaged as a munitions industry. The farmer must receive men and tools if he is to perform his part.

And lastly:

But the first and imperative necessity is to get more production. The American farmer will do it if he gets a chance and the fate of the world may depend upon it.

I should like you to visualize the condition of the farmers of western Canada during the last forty years. The young man of forty years ago stood behind the handles of his walking plough and yoke of oxen and, later on, his horses and gang ploughs, but during the last twenty years that young farmer's son has grown up and has bought a tractor with heavy discs and ploughs and seed drills and heavy machinery drawn by the tractor. In most instances the father never learned to operate power machinery and is still using his horses while the son operates power machinery. The young man is called for military service and away he goes. I need not enlarge upon this picture this afternoon of the father who is now forty years older than he was at that time, carrying on, not with power equipment but with horses. His hogs and cattle have been sold because he has no one to feed them. That is a picture of many farms in western Canada under present conditions.

The original draftee under the National Resources Mobilization Act was called for thirty days training and that was extended to four months. I have no quarrel with that term of four months. Later on he was kept in uniform and he is in uniform to-day. I ask you, sir, do we need to retain these draftees in uniform? Would they not be better employed on the farms, in the coal mines, in the logging camps or at other useful occupations, subject always, of course, to military call when required? Do we need a seventh and an eighth division, a reserve army and a defence army for the protection of Canada from invasion, or from internal strife? Both factors have largely disappeared since this became the formal set-up of the Canadian