

The Address—Mr. Gardiner

naturally would be done through the Department of Trade and Commerce, and that plan should be presented as soon as possible.

Prior to the dinner hour the leader of the opposition suggested that I should call together all the ministers of agriculture in the western provinces, along with all others concerned, and have this question, along with another one he mentioned, discussed at the earliest possible date. Well, before he had made that speech I had already arranged to be in Regina next Friday to meet with the Saskatchewan wheat pool. The wheat pools handle about half the grain marketed in western Canada. I am going there because every year since I have been in Ottawa it has been my custom to go there to their annual meeting of delegates. When this year I suggested it might be difficult for me to go I received a message from them to the effect that they thought it was important that I should go. Therefore I expect to be there on Friday.

At that time naturally we will discuss this problem which is confronting members of the house; and when it has been discussed with them I am sure that anything I do not know now with regard to the situation existing there, I will know after I have attended the meeting. The government has been giving consideration to the whole question, as to how the problem should be dealt with. I know that they are in a position to discuss it finally with the governments in the west, and those who handle wheat, and I know that that is being done. Beyond that I am not in a position to go tonight, other than to assure the house that everything which can be done under the circumstances—in view of the fact that one does not know from week to week just what conditions are going to be—everything that can be done under the circumstances is being done. And I am quite satisfied that when the method of dealing with it is finally worked out, the house will be fairly well satisfied with what is done and with what is suggested.

The leader of the opposition dealt with one other matter. I know my time is almost expired, but if I could have only five minutes more I could deal with it.

Some hon. Members: Go on.

Mr. Gardiner: The other matter was the fact that we are not producing quite as much food of some kinds as we were producing during the war. That in itself proves the fact that we can produce more, and I on many occasions have made the statement that we could produce more bacon than we are producing, if it were essential that it be

[Mr. Gardiner.]

done. We can produce more dairy products than we are producing, if it were necessary to do so—and so on.

The point raised by the leader of the opposition confronts us with this question: If we did raise any more, what are we going to do with it? Now, I realize this, that there are a great many people in the world who could make use of it.

An hon. Member: India.

Mr. Gardiner: It is not enough just to say that we are not producing it. Farmers are not certain that they should produce it, in the circumstances. We must find out all the facts in relation to that question. I had no intention whatever of taking a trip out of Canada within the next two or three weeks, until recent events brought persons onto the scene that we have not been meeting for some time. It is my intention to go to Rome to attend the FAO meeting. I shall be leaving a week from today for that purpose, and will be discussing matters about which the leader of the opposition and others are concerned with the persons who are there from the different countries in order to satisfy my own mind as to the situation. I hope to be better able to satisfy the government and others as to the position when I come back.

In relation to the suggestion that we should call the provincial ministers together to determine what we should produce next year, as well as what ought to be done generally in connection with the difficulties of harvesting the crop this year, I would only remind the house that ever since 1939 we have been holding at least annually, and in some years two or three times, meetings of the very type suggested by the leader of the opposition. The meeting for this year was called about a month ago, and is to be held on December 3, 4 and 5. I expect to be back from the conference which I am attending on November 29 or 30 in time to attend that meeting. At that meeting we have not only the provincial ministers of agriculture from the three prairie provinces, but we invite the ministers from all the provinces. Most of the provinces have appointed their deputies as advisers to that conference. Then, they bring along with them a sufficient number of their officials to be able to give us all the information concerning conditions in the different provinces. When we are discussing markets for feed wheat, for example, we are concerned as to what the ministers of agriculture and officials of the different provinces think, whether east or west. When we are discussing the question of whether or not we are going to continue paying freight on feed grain coming from the western provinces to