

news comes from some sections of the western provinces with respect to our wheat productions and it is said that other agricultural crops in some others of the provinces are very considerably short of the normal. The financial conditions likely to prevail during the coming winter I think inevitably will bring distress upon many of the people of the country and consequently the quantity and cost of the food supplies of this country is a matter of extreme importance.

With the best possible motives and in all sincerity I do suggest to the Government the desirability of considering the question of placing upon the free list many of the food supplies of the country. It may be that our own production will meet our own consumption and the extraordinary demand which will be made upon our food supply, but nevertheless I can see no reason why the question of even the temporary elimination of duties upon the foodstuffs of this country should not be seriously taken into consideration by the Government. I am not suggesting this to-day as a matter of permanent policy for the Government if their economic views be different, and if it would not be in harmony with their views as to what would be the true fiscal policy of the Government. I am now suggesting it merely as a wise temporary policy and one calculated to meet the unfortunate conditions now prevailing and which may prevail in a more pronounced way during the coming months of this year.

There is another thing to be said in connection with the tariff upon foodstuffs and it is that if in the judgment of the Government it would be deemed unwise to place a considerable quantity of them upon the free list there might very well be a very considerable diminution in the rate of duty. It might afford some relief to the people of the country and still give the treasury an additional revenue because I think I am quite correct in stating that it would be possible to secure a greater revenue under a very moderate tariff upon foodstuffs than with the tariff rates now existing upon such commodities. There is this further to be said in connection with the suggestion, that if our own foodstuffs are sufficient, the absence of tariff duties upon imports of foodstuffs might enable some exporters in this country to engage in the export trade by reason of the fact that the elimination of duties would bring into Canada a quantity of foodstuffs in excess of our own consumption for export.

[Mr. A. K. Maclean.]

Under the present war conditions prevailing in Europe it is quite obvious that there will be a cessation of manufacturing in countries which hitherto were large exporters to nearly every country in the world. It is worthy of consideration whether or not something might be done to enable Canadian manufacturers to participate in the export of manufactures to countries hitherto largely supplied by the belligerent countries of to-day. This is a matter which might very well be taken into consideration by the Government and particularly by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. This is a question which will receive very keen and careful attention from the Government of the United States. I assume that they anticipate that a great opportunity is open to them for obtaining markets which hitherto they were unable to enter, and I do submit that it is quite possible that Canadian manufacturers and exporters might have to-day an opportunity to obtain markets not hitherto open to them. What the Government might do to assist in the extension of our foreign trade in manufacturers I am not able to suggest at the moment. It may be that a moderate expenditure in the way of encouraging steamship lines between Canada and foreign countries, with strict governmental control over rates, would be as good a method as any other to assist the Canadian manufacturer and exporter. I make this suggestion to the Government trusting that they will take it into consideration, because anything which will at the present time afford new markets for Canadian manufacturers is one worthy of our best consideration.

I shall reserve any remarks I desire to make with reference to tariff changes until the resolutions are before the committee of the House. In making the suggestions I have presented, let me repeat that they are made not in a spirit of opposition to the proposals of the Government to secure additional revenues to carry on the public services of the country, but rather because I believe they are in the public interest and should commend themselves to the House and to the country.

Mr. W. F. MACLEAN (South York): Mr. Speaker, I trust the House will bear with me for a few moments while I address myself to the question raised in these proposals and in the statements made by the hon. Minister of Finance. The proposals of the minister to raise a revenue sufficient for the engagements of the country and to carry on our share of the war meet with