

has been talked about in this chamber recently for just over a week. But let me tell my hon. friend that when it comes to the organization of man-power, the Department of Labour does not take a back seat to any country, excepting perhaps Great Britain, among the united nations.

Mr. WRIGHT: What happened with respect to labour for the unloading of grain in western Canada a year ago?

Mr. MITCHELL: My hon. friend talks about other industries. As I pointed out the other evening, we are just about at the bottom of the barrel. When nearly six out of every eight people between the ages of fourteen and sixty-five are either engaged in the fighting forces or in avocations necessary to the successful prosecution of the war, it gives some indication of the organization that has taken place of the man-power of this country. I do not know of a better organization to go to in western Canada or in Ontario on a question of this description than those with which the department has dealt; it is essentially a farm problem in its broadest sense. The farmers raise the hogs; the packing plants process them, and we have done everything humanly possible to supply sufficient labour for these purposes.

While I have not the figures in front of me, the contribution made by women in this industry and every other industry in the dominion has been magnificent. I said the other evening that we could not win the war without the contribution which is being made by the women of every one of the united nations.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: Do you give them equal pay for it?

Mr. MITCHELL: Let me say also that that contribution has been made possible by the leadership of this government and the cooperation of the people involved. The records indicate that. We sat in this chamber and listened to Madame Chiang Kai-shek when she said that the per capita production of the Canadian people was the highest in the united nations, which is an indication of the organization which has been taking place.

You could not know in advance the number of pigs that would be born this year. As I intimated when my estimates were before the house, I could put 160,000 people to work to-morrow morning in the higher priority industries of the country, which is an indication of the part that the Canadian people are playing in the present war. My hon. friend can rest assured that everything that is humanly possible will be done by the Department of Labour to support those engaged in agriculture.

Mr. GARDINER: In further answer to the hon. member for Yorkton, I have now a set of figures covering a little longer period than those I gave a few moments ago. The payroll on May 13, 1944, was 16,728 in these plants; the payroll on April 1, twenty-nine days earlier than the statement I gave, was 16,164. The difference there is an increase of 564 in the period from April 1 to May 13. That gives an indication of the numbers that the policy which is being followed under the efforts of the Department of Labour has produced in that period. With regard to what was said by the hon. member for Melfort, to the effect that we should find this labour somewhere else, I think he will find, if he discusses the matter with leaders of farm organizations in the west, particularly in Saskatchewan and Alberta, where the problem existed, that they are not inclined to agree, and there is a very good reason why they should not be inclined to agree with the statement that agriculture should not be appealed to on an occasion of this kind to do the best it can to man these plants with labour.

Mr. WRIGHT: I did not say that. I said that during rush seasons on the farm they should not be called upon.

Mr. GARDINER: My hon. friend said that the department should have been making appeals to somebody else. That is about as near to what he said as I can put it. The Department of Labour, of course, and this department did make appeals to others as well, but the particular appeal was made to the farmers, and the reason why that appeal was made to them was twofold. In the first place, there is no one who knows better how to handle live stock, apart from persons who have been running butcher shops and working in packing plants, than the farmers themselves, those who have been brought up on farms. Almost every farmer knows something about butchering, because he has butchered his own hogs and cattle from time to time and he knows something about it.

Mr. GRAYDON: The farmer has to know something about everything.

Mr. GARDINER: Yes. Most of them have some knowledge of most things, and there is one thing they must have that some others have not. They must, if they are to make their way in life on a farm, have a little muscle, and that is necessary, too, around a packing plant. But there is another reason why they are not only prepared to take part in this activity but extremely desirous of doing so, and every farm organization, as a matter of fact, is desirous of helping them to this end. No industry has been more criticized by farmers than the packing industry and