

they do anticipate a very substantial increase in sugar prices by reason of the fact that possibly a good portion of this year's beet-root sugar production in Europe will be curtailed and that next year there will probably be very little beet-root sugar grown in the most important European countries. For these reasons it is a grave mistake to impose additional taxation on sugar. I join with some hon. gentlemen in regretting that at this time, particularly under the conditions surrounding the growth and manufacture of sugar and sugar products, that the Government have sought additional revenue from this source.

Mr. H. BOULAY (Rimouski)—(Translation): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the remarks of the hon. gentlemen from Carleton (Mr. Carvell) and Cape Breton (Mr. Carroll), who both represent rural constituencies, I feel it is incumbent on me to concur in the views voiced by these gentlemen as regards the duties levied on sugar.

I am not prepared to say under the circumstances that the aforesaid gentlemen have made these remarks in a partisan spirit, for in the present emergency, every Canadian feels it is his duty to work hand in hand and help the Government to the utmost of his ability.

I realize that the task of the hon. Minister of Finance and of his colleagues has been an arduous one of late. I am aware that the hon. Minister of Finance has been called upon to prepare under rather short notice a tariff designed to meet the emergency, and that he has acted with all the wisdom possible and so as to forward the best interests of the country.

However, as stated by the hon. members for Carleton and Cape Breton, I think that the duty on sugar is of a nature to bear more particularly on the poorer classes. I am not an expert in the matter, but I think that we might possibly have managed to levy taxation in some other way, without burdening the working classes, which is the most numerous in this country.

I would have preferred voting in favour of higher duties on liquors, tobacco, fancy and toilet articles, automobiles, in a word on all such things as can be dispensed with in these critical times.

The hon. member for Frontenac (Mr. Edwards) stated a moment ago that this increased taxation on sugar should not be taken exception to as, after all, he said, it represented not more than about three dollars per family a year. That may be true, but it should be borne in mind that,

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if the war is protracted, it will not be the rich man in this country who will suffer the most from it, but rather the poor. The small wage-earner will be obliged to purchase not only sugar, but many other goods that he cannot dispense with, even when they are sold at an advanced price, and that will surely happen, since importation will necessarily be impeded.

If our country feels the pinch of hard times, the poorer classes will be those who will suffer most, and those are the people whom Parliament should more particularly look after in this emergency.

What I have just stated is not for the purpose of making difficulties for the Government, for, like every good citizen, I am anxious to do my duty. We are not here to make useless speeches; this is a time for deeds, not for words, as was said the other day by the hon. member for Montmagny (Mr. L'Espérance). But I think I should be allowed to offer these few suggestions, which appear to me to be in the interest of the country and of that class of workers whom I represent in Parliament.

Mr. MICHAUD: When I was leaving home some of my constituents, who will probably not be in a position to earn money during the coming winter, asked me to approach the Prime Minister and beg of him not to impose taxes upon food products. No mention was made of any particular item, but as I see that a tax is proposed upon sugar I would ask the Prime Minister to take into consideration this message brought to this House by myself as the representative of the electors of the counties of Victoria and Madawaska. In those counties we have thousands of men who are accustomed to go into the lumber woods. These men will have no work during the coming winter. Our lumbermen get their money more particularly from the old country, and as they will not be able to carry on that trade under present conditions they will not send men into the woods at least during the coming winter.

I hope that the Prime Minister, having heard hon. gentlemen express the opinion that a tax on sugar will not be favourably looked upon by the poorer people of this country, will reconsider this question and decide not to impose any such tax.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Is there any change in the excise duty on Canadian beet sugar?