

The War—Mr. Blackmore

administration, for it has held office most of the time during which those changes have taken place.

The increase in price has been made notwithstanding the recommendation of a special committee of the House of Commons in 1937 on farm implement prices. The government received the recommendations of this committee, and then allowed the machine companies to increase the price next year, as if in open defiance of the government, of the committee, and of this house. And we talk about democracy! My local newspaper, the *Lethbridge Herald*, is very fond of picking up things which men like me say, and writing editorials about "the things that make Hitler happy." I imagine it would be very fitting for them to take this and write a good editorial on it, and I commend to them through you, sir, the suggestion that they take this set of figures and write an editorial on "making Hitler happy." How in the world could one gladden Hitler any more than to show by such things as this that in a country like Canada, with almost limitless resources, the powers that be are strangling, hampering and impairing at every turn of the road the production of this country and its fighting strength?

Not only did a committee of the House of Commons find that these prices were unjustifiably high; a committee of the Saskatchewan legislature on farm implement prices and distribution, sitting after the rise in price, recommended also that something be done. As usual, however, when any province asks the dominion government to do anything, the dominion government slaps it in the face. Let somebody call that "democracy" and defend it! Canada seems to leave her farmers to take care of themselves. Everybody can be the recipient of the most solicitous care and attention, except farmers and labouring men.

May I contrast our way of doing things with what I read concerning the United States? I hasten to say that I have not personally investigated this matter. I have again to depend upon what I read in the Searle letter. But I find in that letter, from which I quoted previously, a statement by the editor which indicates that at the present time the United States is spending great sums of money in an endeavour to bring about price parity, which means, as hon. members know, a set of prices as a result of which the men who produce and sell have a chance to get as much for the commodities they sell as they have to give for the commodities they buy—a set of circumstances which would overcome the glaring inequities to which I

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refer in the rise of the price index. According to the Searle letter, the United States has made allowances to farmers for keeping certain land out of cultivation, for engaging in a special kind of ploughing to prevent soil erosion, for the planting of trees, or of certain kinds of designated crops and so forth. I quote:

These benefits to farmers, within the lines of this broad "parity" policy, take the form of cash payments. The editor of this Searle letter has just returned from a visit to certain parts of the United States, and finds that the state of Oklahoma, for instance (the only state of which he secured accurate records) in 1939 enjoyed a total cash income from the sale of agricultural products of \$167,000,000. Oklahoma farmers received cash payments from the federal government in addition however of \$27,731,000 or approximately a 17 per cent bonus on the cash they received for their agricultural products on the market.

It is not supposed that this "parity payment", as it is called, of \$27,000,000 brings the income of 213,000 Oklahoma farmers up to the desired and aimed at parity, but at least it is pretended that the cash payment is some step in that direction.

What do Canadian farmers face? Hon. members do not need to have the case reviewed. Out in Saskatchewan they are struggling to organize a cooperative with the hope of obtaining a modification in the price of implements. I contend that no group of farmers in this dominion should be obliged to organize. This government, concerned about the output of agricultural products for the conduct of this war, should be most urgently interested in the welfare of the farmers and go out to seek their needs, instead of pursuing the shifting, vacillating, uncertain, disheartening policies which have obtained in this country for the last several years, and just exactly at the time when the farmer begins to get something like a reasonable price for his butter, pegging the price, putting the ceiling in butter prices, all right, but utterly ignoring the floor.

The third great disability from which the provinces are suffering is that of an outrageously inequitable freight rate structure. No particular province is alone in this respect; I believe all are suffering. I referred for a moment or two to the exorbitant increase in the freight rates on that binder—may I quote again?—from \$17.80 in 1913 to \$26.08 in 1936. People will ask, perhaps, what will you do? I am not suggesting what should be done. I think I know what should be done. I know there are many people who do not think I do. The amazing thing to me is that so many hon. members seem willing to let the patient die rather than try a new remedy, and they are so cocksure and all-wise about everything one suggests to them. They can sneer and