

Mr. COLDWELL: The rule must work both ways.

Mr. SPEAKER: The point before us at the moment is as to the right of the minister to reply, without the time limitation, and I have given my ruling.

Mr. KARL K. HOMUTH (Waterloo South): Mr. Speaker, I am particularly pleased that no one interrupted the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) and raised the point of order that the minister was exceeding his time because, before proceeding with the remarks I had intended to make, I wish to deal with two or three matters to which the minister referred. Perhaps the latter part of his speech was the most important when he began to deal with the question of farm labour and referred to the letter which each member of the house received this morning from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell). That letter in itself, I submit, justifies all the criticism that has been levelled against this government for taking labour off the farms of this country. The minister has said that we have produced a tremendous tonnage of foodstuffs. We have. We had to do it; it was our job to do it. But we have not produced as much foodstuffs in this country as we could have produced if we had had a proper farm labour policy applicable to this country. There are in this letter clauses which, if carefully read over will be seen to bear out the need for many of the things for which we have asked in the past. Under this new regulation, men who are conscientious objectors, men who knew nothing but farming, had done nothing but farming all their life, are now to be allowed to stay on the farm and to produce foodstuffs, instead of being sent up the Montreal river or into the northern wilds to build roads. In my county of Waterloo I know that many of these men were taken off the farm and sent into camps to build roads which will be destroyed before they can be completed. This was a wrong policy. Had these men been allowed to remain on the farms in the county of Waterloo we would have been able to produce larger amounts of foodstuffs than we did in our county. The farmers of this country have done a tremendous job. They had a job to do, and they faced it. They faced it in spite of the many obstacles which have been put in their way by the lack of a proper man-power policy under this government.

This letter also states that farmers will have the right in the off-season months to go into certain industries such as logging, mining and fishing. We have hundreds and hundreds of farmers who can be spared from our farms in western Ontario during the off-season. Under

this new regulation they are to be restricted to these particular industries in their search for employment in the off-season. Nevertheless to-day hundreds of them are working in the munitions industries in western Ontario and doing a splendid job. I do not know how we could have got along without them. These men are now prohibited from going into any munitions factory during the off-season to produce munitions of war. Surely that regulation in itself shows that the matter has not been properly thought out. These men are not adapted to fishing and the other industries specified in the letter, but they are capable of going into munitions factories and producing munitions. Therefore I say that the regulations dealing with man-power on the farm are still far short of what they ought to be under a proper man-power policy. These men in the province of Ontario particularly, hundreds of them, have contributed hundreds of thousands of precious man-hours in producing the munitions of war.

At the beginning it was announced by the government that the farmers could go into the munitions industries during the off-season without losing their category as farmers. Then a few weeks ago another regulation came out prohibiting them from working for more than sixty days in a munitions factory. Yet these men are engaged in every form of munitions industry in western Ontario, and many of them have worked for much longer periods than two months. Have they now to quit their jobs, go back to the farm, at present covered with three or four or five feet of snow, and sit and twiddle their thumbs until seeding time comes around? Surely, Mr. Speaker, that in itself shows that this policy has not been well thought out and that there is still room for improvement in our man-power policy. The very fact of these regulations coming out shows beyond all peradventure that there is a shortage of man-power on the farms in this country and that the government is now beginning to realize this. The government is now trying to cure what is the result of their own ill-advised policy.

The Minister of Agriculture also lectured the members of the house for having made certain statements; for instance, a statement with regard to the shortage of bacon and that we should not buy bacon. Was it not the minister himself or one of the men in his department who made an appeal to the Canadian people not to eat bacon and other pork products so that we could ship more of them to Britain? It was not anything said by us in the house which publicized the statement referred to in that international journal; it was the Department of Agriculture itself that requested the