

pool and others, but apparently they have not succeeded in gaining the attention of the government. During the last recess I spent my time among the farming people of the prairies. There have been numerous conferences and gatherings of farm people, because the farmers themselves are only too anxious and willing to make their contribution to increased production. But as I said before they lack the facilities. At these conferences there has been very wide, broad discussion as to what the farming people need, and this evening I want to lay before the members of the house not my opinion as to what it is necessary to give the farmers of this country in order that they may have an opportunity to produce what is needed, but rather the suggestions which have been brought forward by the farmers themselves. Goodness knows, if anybody knows what is needed, they should know. With regard to their suggestions in connection with lack of labour and shortage of man-power, some hon. members may consider their proposals are somewhat drastic. But possibly we have come to the time when this man-power shortage can be solved only by the taking of drastic measures.

The first proposal, for the three western prairie provinces, is that for the time being and for some months ahead all voluntary enlistments be stopped.

The second, that the draft itself be postponed until at least the month of June, when work in connection with seeding operations is completed.

The third, that an arrangement be made during the season when help is greatly needed, particularly in the fall for harvesting operations, so that men who are taking their basic training can go to the fields and work under military discipline. Instead of doing their physical jerks three times a day, stretching their arms and touching their toes, I suggest that they be allowed to do stooking. That would limber up their muscles just as well, and they could do it under military discipline. In that way there would be established a feeling between the farmers and the forces that they were doing work of national importance which has to be done.

The fourth has reference to the women's land army. That has already been mentioned by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid). I am of opinion and have been for some time—in fact I believe I mentioned it last year when I spoke—that women can be very effective on farms. I think a small number of women could start, first of all, to see how efficient they would prove to be. It would be possible to get from farmers an estimate of how many would be willing to

take women on their farms. In many instances these women would not have to be trained. They would be well qualified to drive tractors or trucks, or to milk cows or feed poultry. There might be the necessity of giving some of them a few weeks training. The government would equip them with strong footwear, breeches and a good stout coat. There is no reason why these land girls could not prove as beneficial and as efficient as the land women have proved in other countries.

Again—and this, I would remind the house, is from the farmers themselves—they consider that on many farms where the whole family has to be enlisted in farm work, where the son, the daughter and the wife go out and do outside work, a cost of living bonus should be paid not only to all agricultural labour but to sons, daughters and wives of farmers who can prove that they put in so many hours of work each day outside in the fields.

Then, with regard to the encouragement needed to producers to get into production, I have one or two observations to make. First of all, I must say I read in the press this afternoon that it is quite possible we may have a food ministry. I am satisfied that this will go some way toward helping the present situation. In any event, removal of control of prices on agricultural products from the wartime prices and trade board is an essential procedure. There should be an upward trend of prices toward parity. Not only that, but legislation should be brought down in this House of Commons ensuring over a period of years, or at least for one or two years into the future, a definite price standard or level, so that the farmers may know what to expect.

Then, there is the question of small loans for the smaller farmers. I have been on farms where, for lack of a small amount of cash, farmers who had plenty of feed did not have money to buy an extra cow or two to milk, or did not have money to buy concrete to build a hog-pen so that they could increase their hog production. With a little money women could go into the raising of poultry so that they could sell eggs. And, remember, if we went into poultry raising on a greater scale we would be helping out the beef shortage we are likely to encounter soon. For lack of cash on many thousands of farms production, which might otherwise be made possible, is going to be impeded.

These loans need not be large. I believe \$200 or \$300 might be as much as any farmer would want. When we come to consider it, the loans could be made on the land. I believe these loans should be interest free. We could lend \$200 or \$300 each to a hundred