

Mr. GRAYDON: What happens after consultation? What chance has the wartime prices and trade board to do anything about the matter?

Mr. ILSLEY: The wartime prices and trade board controls, to a degree not understood by the population of Canada, the sources of supply. It controls all the imports of a great range of commodities. It has ramifications everywhere, trying to see to it that the civilian population of this country gets enough of the goods it requires. The board carries on that work in every direction, in regard to imports and everything else. It concerns itself day and night with the question of supply. In the first place, it does not want to ration if that can be avoided. Theoretically, rationing is the most equitable way of distributing goods, but you see what we get into when we start to ration. Here is this question of sugar for canning, about which my colleague has been talking to-night. If I were to ask hon. members now to say what we should do other than what we did, I do not believe anyone could tell me.

Mr. GRAYDON: I can tell you something you should do; now that you are asking for it I shall give you a suggestion. If you are going to do this again do not go advertising all over the country as you did in February, telling the housewives of Canada that on account of the situation existing in regard to canned goods, as a result of which there was likely to be a great shortage, they should go ahead and can their own preserves. There was no limitation suggested in the advertisement, which I brought to the attention of the minister. The housewives all over Canada took the government at their word and made arrangements to do up a tremendous amount of stuff, for the reasons advanced in the advertisement. One reason given was the shortage of tin and other materials which were so necessary for war purposes. I think the minister knows the housewives of Canada have responded nobly to almost every suggestion put forth by the government. I do not know any class of people in Canada who have been so quick to respond to suggestions and requests by the government as have the housewives. On one occasion I went so far as to say that this looked to me, as it must have looked to many people, almost like a deliberate hoax upon the housewives, the way in which the sugar rationing was carried on. After the advertisements appeared in the newspapers; after all plans had been made, then they found that limitations were placed upon the amount of sugar available. In some rural areas

the allotment was twenty-five pounds per person for canning purposes; in some urban areas it was fifteen pounds per person. The worst feature of it, however, was this; and I am going to offer a suggestion in this regard, though I am sure it is not necessary. After this do not leave it to the poor local rationing boards all over the country to be the goats for government policy; because that is, I think, what they have been, although the minister may not have intended it in that way in the first instance. Actually what happened was that a certain amount of sugar in certain sections was given, and local ration boards—most of them volunteers—found the great body of housewives wanting to know what in the world the policy of the government was. First of all, they asked housewives to preserve plenty of fruit and vegetables, and then, in the final analysis, without any previous knowledge or any previous instructions from the government, they found that the local ration boards came along and said, "You are going to get only so much." That was not fair, and I submit the minister knows it was not fair.

If he wishes to have a suggestion—and he asked for it—then let us not have that situation occur again. I say that, because I have been informed by people in various townships where, with one township adjoining another, on account of the difference in the rationing in different districts, people in some townships got considerably less than people in others, although they were actually neighbours, and there was only an imaginary dividing line between them. In my opinion that kind of thing should not be repeated, so far as rationing is concerned. It caused untold concern to the housewives of Canada. I am not trying to exaggerate, nor am I trying to over-emphasize the point that has been raised so many times.

In addition to that, another situation has arisen, namely, that sugar coupons were for five pounds each. In some instances they found that perhaps they were entitled to an odd amount. Instead of getting the full amount to which they were entitled, they found that the five-pound coupons gave them less than the amount to which they were entitled under the last regulations of the local boards.

If the minister wants suggestions—and he asked for them—I will offer him these. I am quite sure the minister will not make the mistake again, because if he is going to tell the housewives anything, then let him tell them at the beginning that there will be some limitation. Do not send out an advertisement all over the country asking them to do certain