

tion and, on the whole, against the government's policy of cutting, this year, the appropriations of Agriculture by one-third.

It is truly deplorable that this government, while endeavouring to cut down expenditure, thought fit of making agriculture bear a greater proportion of this reduction than the other departments. One cannot too strongly protest against the government's policy of simply reducing by 10 or 12 per cent the appropriations of National Defence and other departments, which I may designate of a lower order, while those of Agriculture are cut down 33½ per cent.

Far be it from my thought of placing too much blame on the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Weir), who I am aware is animated by the very best intentions. I am rather inclined to pity him owing to the shabby way he was treated by the cabinet when the estimates for the current year were prepared. I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Agriculture was supported as he should have been by some of his colleagues who show so much sympathy for the farming class, at election time. Of what help, for instance, was the hon. Postmaster General (Mr. Sauvé), he who, during the election, proclaimed himself the champion of the farming community. Bewailing the sad situation of agriculture, he stated that should his party assume power, prosperity would reappear in all farm homes. And the hon. Minister of Marine (Mr. Duranleau), who made such a fuss over the consequences of the New Zealand treaty on Canadian dairy products; he also, I think, let slip an excellent opportunity of proving his sincerity by not forcing the cabinet to make a more generous grant to the industry which is the foundation of national prosperity.

The government had recourse to a blank signature in order to provide for the requirements of agriculture and the maintenance of order and peace in Canada; instead of indulging in fine speeches and including agriculture in that blank signature, it would have been preferable to grant the Department of Agriculture the whole amount required for the current year.

The funds placed at the disposal of the government to help the farmers, pursuant to the famous blank signature act, judging from last year's experience, was not distributed to the Quebec farmers, and the millions of dollars expended under this item rather went to the western farmers. I challenge the hon. Minister of Marine and Post Office to deny this fact.

I feel in no way jealous of what has been done for the west which, I have no doubt,

[Mr. Séguin.]

was greatly in need of help, however, I must point out the injustice of not assisting the eastern farmers who also greatly feel the pinch of the crisis we are undergoing.

May I, sir, specially draw the attention of the Minister of Agriculture on the altogether embarrassed position in which a certain number of farmers of the county of l'Assomption are placed. Owing to the proximity of the city of Montreal, the farmers of a number of parishes in my county sell their milk and cream in Montreal; they have always derived the greater part of their revenue from that source and, notwithstanding the low prices obtained, this industry permitted them, at least, to meet the daily needs. Certain regulations adopted last year by the Municipal Council of Montreal, oblige the dairies who wish to trade with that city to establish that their cattle have passed the tuberculine test.

At a time when distress prevails not only among the workmen of towns, but also among the farmers of this country, the government is not justified in not having recourse to all the means at its disposal to relieve the so deserving farmers who certainly form the basis of our national prosperity. In December, 1930, pursuant to an order in council, No. P.C. 2879, the government set aside as a restricted area for the eradication of bovine tuberculosis, the county of l'Assomption. However, since December, 1930, the tuberculine test on cattle has not been carried out and only special private tests have been undertaken. In December, 1931, a delegation numbering about forty farmers came to Ottawa to interview the hon. Minister of Agriculture, so as to request him to have the provisions of the order in council carried out, without further delay. The reply of the Minister of Agriculture was that he could not have this work undertaken immediately, but that as soon as the 1932 estimates were approved, these tests would be proceeded with.

Since that date, I have more than once written at the request of those interested, to the hon. Minister of Agriculture, and I have here the answers to my correspondence. First, on April 6, he expressed his regrets of having to inform me of the decision of the department, to simply complete, this year, the second tuberculine test of cattle which, had passed the first test—except under special circumstances.

As, in a previous letter, I reminded the hon. Minister of Agriculture that he had promised the delegation to carry out as soon as possible the tuberculine test of cattle, he replied that he could not implement his