

as an event of extraordinary importance, especially to the agriculturists of Canada, because for the first time in Canada's history will the chieftainship of one of the great political parties rest in a man who is essentially of the soil, a man moreover who is well versed in the science of government. His sincere conviction is that Canada cannot be prosperous unless all groups within the country enjoy prosperity. Agriculture is Canada's basic industry, and without prosperous basic industries Canada can never prosper.

The greatest asset that any Canadian statesman can possess is a profound knowledge of agriculture and its many serious problems. The Hon. John Bracken qualifies completely in that respect. He has a scientific, technical and practical knowledge of agriculture such as is possessed by few people in this dominion, certainly not by any member of the present House of Commons. At the Rowell-Sirois conference of provincial premiers with the Prime Minister, held in this chamber, in January, 1942, he proved himself a great national figure, having a grasp of national problems throughout the dominion. The platform or peoples' programme adopted by the Progressive Conservative convention affords ample scope for a leader of Mr. Bracken's broad humanitarian convictions.

Any party is as good as its leader and can never be better. The Minister of Munitions and Supply (Mr. Howe) intimated recently that Canada would presently emerge as a great industrial nation and that the basic industries would henceforth be only of secondary importance. His is precisely the point of view which has condemned Canadian agriculture to the role of hewers of wood and drawers of water for the urban communities. Judging by governmental action to date this view is also held by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilesley) and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) and others.

To-day Canada's agricultural population, which is over one-third of the total population, is receiving less than one-sixth of the national income. The Prime Minister, speaking in this debate on February 1, as will be found on page 49 of *Hansard*, said the reason why butter is rationed, with a hint that beef also might be rationed, is that Canada is providing the enormous supplies of food which she is sending to the people of Great Britain, from the supplies of foodstuffs of this country. That statement is untrue with respect to beef. Until the Prime Minister or the Minister of Agriculture or the Minister of Trade and Commerce can stand up in this house

and say what quantity of beef has been shipped, giving the dates of shipment, to Great Britain during the past calendar year, or give us that information at least in confidence, then I say that statement is as untrue as it is misleading.

Mr. GARDINER: The hon. gentleman has mentioned my name, and the Prime Minister is not here to reply. What the Prime Minister did state was that the need for any rationing arose from the fact that food was being shipped to Great Britain; and I am sure my hon. friend will agree that if a percentage of the butter fat represented by the cheese being shipped to Britain had been converted into butter, which would have been quite possible, there would have been no necessity for the rationing of butter.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I was speaking particularly of beef.

Mr. GARDINER: Beef is in exactly the same relationship to pork. We are shipping approximately seventy per cent of our bacon and ham to Britain.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): Pork is not beef.

Mr. GARDINER: Partly as a result, all our beef, much of which previously went to the United States, is being consumed in this country.

Mr. ROSS (Souris): I desire to continue with my speech—and no proof has been given by the minister with regard to beef, the only item I am discussing at the moment. With reference to butter, which the minister just mentioned, the present shortage is due to the price ceiling and to the inefficiency and muddling with regard to the question of manpower in this country. The lack of parity prices, more than anything else, is responsible for the butter shortage, and that is also the case with many other agricultural commodities. Many dairy herds have been shipped to the United States, and many dairy animals have been slaughtered in this country. Last year the producers received 50 cents per pound for butter fat used in making cheese and only 35 cents per pound for butter fat going into butter. To-day, including the 10 cent bonus, the producer receives 44 cents per pound for butter fat going into butter, while his neighbour in the United States receives approximately 50 cents. When Canada went to war the government used as a base period for industry and organized labour the years 1926-29. When the United States went to war they took as their base period for the whole nation the years 1913-14. On January 30, 1943, the