

## The Food Question of Great Britain and Canada

"Difficulties still persist in attending the shoppers in pursuit of provisions. This week there has again been a scarcity of meat, both fresh and cured. For bacon there has been a great demand, but it slackened off towards the end of the week, when the new rationing programme came into force, by which breakfast bacon was forbidden and meat supplies reduced and forbidden on two days a week. It will be a new experience for many people to have meatless meals twice a week, but they will doubtless welcome the relief it will afford from seeking supplies. The butchers' shops have, nevertheless, been haunted by crowds of people, day by day, but they did not get much reward for their continued vigilance. The grocers and provision merchants have also been in straits, and they have this week, followed the example of the butter shops and announced the articles which had run out of stock. Thus one provision firm notified its patrons that it had "No bacon, butter, cheese, lard, or margarine." The multiple butter shops have found business so hard that following the usual weekly half holiday they closed altogether on Thursday. This will be the usual condition of things presently, as crowds and queues will be at an end. We learn that the city and surrounding authorities have agreed upon a rationing scheme for the district, which is now being formulated at the local Food Control offices. When it is completed and has received the approval of the Ministry of Food, the cards will be issued to the citizens and their neighbors, and all will fare alike. It is proposed to ration butter, margarine, tea, bacon and ham, and we feel sure many citizens will be only too glad to welcome the scheme."

The above extract, taken from an English weekly is strongly illustrative of what the citizens of Great Britain are up against to secure the family food supply. The same paper, too, shows the fine spirit of the people in accepting without a murmur the regulations of the authorities made necessary by war conditions. The lesson to us in Canada is obvious—**conserve our food, so that our fellow citizens over the seas may have more to eat.** Up to present moment very little has been conserved, in spite of all the talk and the food pledges and the regulations. This is not the fault of the Food Board and its lieutenants, who have done their best—and a good best too—to bring home to the people their duty in the matter. It seems to us that the reason why there is so much apathy on the part of the general public towards food conservation as it affects the individual, is that the appeals are too general in tone. The different departments of the Food Controllers' office send out their appeals as touching Canadians generally, and they cannot do otherwise, but the local committees simply pass on the same appeals to their respective communities without any attempt to adapt them to local conditions. We recently took occasion to discuss the question of food conservation with a number of individuals, and while each one recognized the necessity of Can-

ada saving all the food possible to send across the sea, not one saw his own responsibility in the matter. And yet these were all intelligent men who had subscribed at different times to war funds, and who would have resented very sharply any suggestion that they were lax in their patriotism. In other words the individual has not been really touched.

As the war lengthens out the individual responsibility of Canadians in saving food for those who are depending on this country for supplies increases. Each community has its special responsibility to substitute for certain foods wanted overseas other foods equally nutritious, but perhaps not so palatable, yet men, women and children in every community are eating daily some necessity of our men at the front. The difficulty is they don't seem to notice it, and herein lies the opportunity of the local food committee.

It will be noticed that in the above extract reference is made to a rationing scheme being formulated at the local Food Control offices. These local food offices are situated in the town hall and the administration practically a committee, though not necessarily, of the members of the local council. In this way the local authorities of the Old Country are doing yeoman service for the great cause and we cannot understand why the Federal authorities have not sought the co-operation of the local councils for the same purpose. But these is still time for such co-operation and no doubt if appealed to the local councils will rise to the occasion. It is up to the Federal authorities to make the appeal.

### THE NEW MUNICIPAL DEPT. AT QUEBEC.

The Quebec Legislature at its last session passed a bill to establish a municipal department for the province, under a responsible minister who will be known as the Minister of Municipal Affairs. The Act creating the department is the strongest of its kind in Canada and in the hands of a good minister civic government in the province ought soon to be on a much better plane than what it is to-day. The new minister of the department has already been appointed in the person of the Hon. Walter Mitchell, who introduced the bill on behalf of the Government. As Provincial Treasurer Mr. Mitchell has been signally successful—having during his treasurer-ship secured the confidence of the citizens—so that he starts on his new duties with every prospect of success. In our January issue we pointed out some of the difficulties of administering municipal Quebec—the many separate charters, etc.—and much educational work will have to be done before the local councils realize that a closer check on their administration is in the interests of the community and the province generally.