

under the spur of increased profits, they are incapable of meeting the demand. Such conditions, unless relief can be provided, must result in an increasingly acute shortage and lead, eventually, to famine.

Such approximately is the situation in the world to-day. With the farming populations reduced by millions of producers and the number of non-producers and abnormal consumers tremendously swollen, high prices are only a natural, inescapable consequence of a world condition. It is unfair, therefore, to compare prices to-day with those before the war and to blame the Government or the Food Controller or anyone else for the advance. Rather, prices should be compared under prevailing conditions in different countries. Real wages, being the amount of food, clothing and other goods which money wages will buy, determine the welfare of the wage-earning population. Judged on this basis, Canadians are absolutely the most fortunate people in the world to-day.

In proportion to wages, prices of food are lower in Canada than in any other country. Official figures have been published in *The Bulletin*, showing that food prices here are much lower than in Europe and considerably lower than in the United States. This is the case, because our Canadian cities and towns are smaller and closer to the sources of supply—because Canadian consumers actually are closer to the land than the people of any other country. We are prosperous as a result of war orders and, at the same time, we buy our food cheaper than other countries, because we pay less for freight and distribution charges. Production is the crux of the food problem. Twenty years ago in Canada there were three people on the land raising foodstuff to every two who lived in cities and towns. To-day that proportion is just reversed. Is it any wonder that food is scarce and prices high? The remedy is obvious—become a producer. It is true that Canada is better off in this respect than other countries at the present time, but even Canada has been getting away from the land.

The only possible way in which Canada could escape the consequences of the world shortage of food would be to stop exportation and to fatten on our own surplus production, while the rest of the world starved. To do so would involve repudiation of our obligations to the Allies and would make us contemptible in the eyes of all the world.

TO MAINTAIN PRODUCTION.

Government Takes Steps to Retain Necessary Workers on Farms.

The following statement has been issued by the Government:—

“The attention of the Minister of Agriculture has been drawn to a number of instances where some of the Exemption Tribunals have evidently misinterpreted the instructions of the Militia Council respecting the drafting of men for overseas service and have refused exemption to men who are absolutely needed to continue the operation of farms and the production of foodstuffs. The matter has been considered by the Government and an Order in Council passed as follows:

“His Excellency the Governor General in Council, upon the recommendation of the Acting Minister of Agriculture, and under and by virtue of the provisions of the War Measures Act, 1914, and the Military Service Act, 1917, authorizes the Minister of Agriculture to appoint a representative of the Department of Agriculture in such counties or districts in any province of Canada as he may determine:

“(1) To attend the sittings of the Tribunals appointed under the Military Service Act to guard the national interest in connection with the production of foodstuffs.

“(2) To appeal from the decision of the Tribunals in any case where, in his opinion, the Tribunal has not given due weight to the urgency of maintaining our food supplies.

“(3) To investigate and report upon appeals or applications for exemption where the ground of appeal or application is that the party seeking exemption should in the national interest be retained in food production rather than enrolled in the Expeditionary Force.

“The Minister of Agriculture has been looking into the matter very thoroughly for some days, and from information which has been received by him he believes that some of the Exemption Tribunals have failed to give due weight to the urgency of maintaining our food supply. It has therefore been decided, on the recommendation of the Minister of Agriculture, that immediate action should be taken to prevent reduction of output of foodstuffs and disorganization of work upon the farms.”