

## MEAT SHORTAGE; RATIONING

1. THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE submitted comparative figures for civilian and military consumption of meat in various countries, including those for the United States and Canada.<sup>†</sup> It was to be noted that without rationing the Canadian figure was substantially below the American.

Experience in this country had already shown that rationing and the imposition of restrictions upon slaughtering failed to produce additional supplies for export and resulted in the over-burdening of facilities. Labour shortage in the packing plants was an important deterrent.

In the circumstances, the recommendations of the Food Requirements Committee should not be accepted.

2. THE MINISTER OF MINES AND RESOURCES spoke of the serious prospect of severe shortages in European countries which threatened starvation and civil disturbances in the not far distant future. The question for decision was whether or not the Committee's proposals would enable Canada to provide additional meat where it was needed.

3. MR. CRERAR submitted and read a supplementary report of the Food Requirements Committee upon the points referred to them by the Cabinet at the last meeting.

The report expressed the view that the degree of rationing proposed would make meat available for export at a rate of approximately 200 million pounds a year more than could be effected if the present controls were left unchanged.

(Letter, Chairman Food Requirements Committee to the Secretary and enclosed memorandum to the Cabinet, March 24, 1945.)<sup>†</sup>

4. MR. CRERAR also read a statement made in the House of Commons by the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Abbott), on February 29th, 1944, stating that meat rationing was being suspended until the congestion in both storage and transportation was cleared up.

5. MR. GARDINER spoke of the misrepresentation and misunderstanding of the Canadian position in the United States and suggested that it was important that the facts be made public concerning Canadian consumption levels.

6. THE CABINET, after further considerable discussion, agreed to defer decision upon the Food Requirements Committee's report until discussions with the United Kingdom Ministers of Food and Production had been held at the beginning of the following week; the Minister of Agriculture, meantime, to concert with the Department of External Affairs concerning the issue of a statement explanatory of the Canadian meat consumption situation.

A. D. P. HEENEY  
Secretary