

was defending the farmer. It was not my hon. friend from Broadview; it was a member on his side; he threw insults at me because I was doing my duty as a good Canadian and because I wanted this country to survive, as it will do if the minister accepts suggestions which come from those who know the bad condition of the farmers in the country.

Mr. MAYBANK: There are just two observations which arise in my mind from the remarks made by the hon. member for Témiscouata. I shall give them briefly. I have, more particularly toward the close of his remarks, been listening intently, when the hon. member was pointing out that persons are called into the army who become defaulters or who become deserters; and then, as he said, they get put in the "clink," and are of no use to agriculture and of no use to the army. They are of no use in any section of either civil or military society. I do not suppose that any person will quarrel with that statement. But surely it does not constitute any argument in favour of anything or against anything; it is just a collection of words, which are true enough but do not lead us anywhere. I could always make that statement with reference to any criminal who is put in gaol. He is of no use to the country when he is in prison; you can only put him to picking rope or something like that, but you have lost him to the community. But, sir, that would be no reason whatever for wiping off the statute books the criminal code or for disbanding the police force, or for, in general, abandoning our ordered state of society in favour of chaos. I am quite sure that the hon. member for Témiscouata, when he thinks the matter over, will realize that when he has said that a man in the "clink" is no good as a farmer he has spoken that which is true, but which just does not mean anything, does not add up to anything of any importance. I am quite sure he will agree with that statement.

The other comment which occurs to me with reference to what the hon. gentleman said about putting people on the farm and keeping them there, is this. I quite understand, even though I do not follow agricultural pursuits but am strictly a city man, the importance of agriculture; I think every person does. But there do come times on farms when those who are working the farms have to make up their minds whether they will go a distance away from the homestead to put out a prairie fire, or perchance a forest fire, which is coming in their direction. After all, that is the sort of decision which has to be made in this country to-day. No person denies the importance of agriculture; indeed I should imagine that a

group of men would almost vie with each other, were they to converse together, in emphasizing its importance. But this government, and the minister charged with the particular duties which we are now examining, are charged with the responsibility of deciding when one shall go to put out the prairie fire or the forest fire, and who it shall be that shall go.

I believe that almost any person can rise in his place in this chamber and make a strong plea for some particular industry as against certain others, and can criticize in its every aspect that which the government and the minister have been doing. But it seems to me, sir, that when one is considering whether or not the boys should be left back on the farm, due regard should be had to all the other needs of the country and, indeed, of the world. I submit in all kindness that the hon. member for Témiscouata has not been taking that broad view; indeed, I doubt very much if he could have spoken with all the emphasis he used to-night if he had been taking a broad view of the problem, because that problem is so vast, so difficult, and so complicated that one can only express opinions upon it with great humility and with very much more uncertainty than the hon. gentleman has displayed this evening.

Now I really rose to make a few remarks with reference to the selective service problem generally and to turn after a moment or two to a particular matter connected with coal mining, coal delivery and so forth; and to lay before the committee a few facts that may be dealt with by the minister in due course. In the first place, I would say that what some rather ill-natured journals are pleased to call the "man-power muddle" cannot after all, in a country such as this, be quite so great a muddle as these journals would claim when the achievements of the dominion are such as they have been.

Again, I do not suppose there is a member of this chamber who has not damned the selective service, the minister in charge of it and all connected with it. I do not suppose there is a member of the ministry who has not criticized the selective service set-up. Every person in that very department has, no doubt, done the same. I should not be at all surprised if the minister holds cabinet meetings with himself and complains about the way the departmental work goes on. I know that everyone to whom I have spoken has, at some time or other, complained with reference to this organization; yet most people with whom I speak outside do end their criticisms by admitting that this is one of the most difficult of tasks, one of the most thorny problems in government to-day; and I do find, in spite