

the 1943 crop. In eastern Canada and particularly in Ontario a very small acreage of fall wheat was sown. Fall ploughing was only nicely under way in many sections at the freeze-up, and there were large areas left in grass which would have been ploughed but for the fear in the minds of the farmers that they would be unable to harvest their crop in the fall of 1943.

In spite of these large crops last year, however, it has been shown by the leader of the opposition that shortages already are beginning to develop, that several kinds of farm products are rationed already and that others may be rationed shortly. Some mention was made yesterday of the rationing of butter which, as everybody knows, is an accomplished fact. The Prime Minister took the leader of the opposition to task for not stating that the rationing and the shortage of butter were occasioned by heavy shipments overseas. As a matter of fact I have made some investigations, and I cannot find that there was a pound of butter shipped overseas to the United Kingdom last year. In the case of beef, another farm item which is likely to be rationed in the near future, if we can believe the Minister of Agriculture who, according to radio reports, made a statement to that effect at Brandon a short time ago, there has been very little if any sent overseas. Therefore I think the Prime Minister was perhaps wide of the mark in criticizing the leader of the opposition for making such a statement.

The government has had plenty of warning that there is a labour shortage on the farms of Canada. A short time ago I mentioned the dominion-provincial conference held in December. At that conference where the provinces were represented, where the Department of Agriculture at Ottawa was represented and where the federation of agriculture and other farm organizations were present, a committee was set up to study farm labour problems. They brought down to that conference a report which, I believe, was passed. I have in my hand a copy of the report, and I must say it makes interesting reading. With the permission of the house I will place on record what it contains. The report of the conference on skilled farm labour quoted in the *Farmer's Advocate* of December 24, states:

In view of this increased production required for 1943, in face of the decreasing labour supply the conference is of the opinion that the urgent necessity for conserving and supplementing skilled farm labour available must be recognized. And in view of the misunderstanding and confusion which exists with respect to farm man-power, the importance of a clearer

definition of the man-power policy as it is expected to apply to agriculture is evident. With a view to contributing to the solution of the difficulties inherent in the farm man-power problem the following proposals are submitted for the consideration of the national selective service authorities.

There are five of these proposals, and I shall state them as briefly as possible to the house. They are:

1. That agricultural man-power policies be administered with the assistance of local farm committees, and the provincial departments of agriculture working in conjunction with the employment and selective service offices.

As far as I am aware no local farm committees have been set up, and if the provincial departments of agriculture are working in conjunction with the employment and selective service officers it is certainly to only a very limited degree. Then:

2. That the initial call-up which goes out to men on the farm be reworded so that they will clearly understand what the notice means in respect to their status as an essential agricultural worker, and state definitely what procedure they should follow for obtaining deferment.

I saw these notices not so very long ago, and as far as I know there has not yet been any change in them. If there has been a change it has been of only a very minor nature. So that as far as I know the second recommendation has not been implemented up to the present time.

3. That all farm workers whose essentiality has been established should be given some form of official recognition which would indicate they are performing an important war service.

That is something which should have been done long ago. Many a skilled farm labourer has left the farm to enlist—and all honour to him for doing so—who would have served his country just as well if he had stayed on the farm to produce foodstuffs. He would have been doing just as useful a service there as he could possibly perform in the armed forces. I believe such men would have been perfectly satisfied to remain on the farms, had they had some way of showing that they were doing their part, and that they were willing to do anything demanded of them.

4. That a much larger proportion of men on farms where essentiality has been established be granted the longest postponement term with each successive call.

I believe in some instances that suggestion has been followed. Postponements have been granted on the U.F.N.—until further notice—basis. I believe those postponements are fairly permanent. But when the National Resources Mobilization Act was introduced, and it was found that no exemptions were to be allowed, and that only postponements were