

ST. JOHN BOARD OF TRADE IS WILLING TO ASSIST IN INCREASED PRODUCTION CAMPAIGN IN PROVINCE

Professor J. W. Mitchell of Provincial Department of Agriculture Addresses Board on Necessity of Action—Matter Discussed from Standpoints of the Farmer and the Business Man — Opinion that School Boys' Assistance Will Be of Great Advantage.

The St. John Board of Trade are desirous of doing everything possible to advance the campaign for the increased production of food products. After hearing Professor J. W. Mitchell, the live stock and dairy superintendent for the Provincial Department of Agriculture, address them on "How the business men might lend their support to increased production of food products," several members of the board expressed their willingness to assist in any manner possible. The members also gave hearty approval to the proposal to have the boys of the High School work on the farm, while several pledged themselves if the necessity arose to give their employees holidays to enable them to proceed to the farm to bring in the harvest.

Last evening's meeting was held at Bond's with President A. H. Wetmore occupying the chair. After a delightful lunch had been enjoyed by the members present, the president introduced Professor Mitchell who was well received.

Professor Mitchell spoke in part as follows:

"When I received an invitation from your secretary to address you upon the subject of how the business man can best co-operate with the farmer, with a view to increased production, I gladly accepted it. I know that you are anxious to serve and I trust that something may be said that will assist towards the translation of your good intentions into definite action that will result in good.

"Why are we all so intensely anxious to see the Allies win in this great world conflagration?"

"In some of the great wars of the past there was so little at stake that one would have been justified in assuming an attitude towards their outcome similar to that of the old lady to the fight between her husband and the bear, when she said: 'I never saw a fight before that I cared so little which won.' Not so with this war.

"Not long ago I read in Punch, an article headed 'The World, the Flesh and the Kaiser.' Why such a heading? In fighting the spirit of Kaiserism what are we fighting for and what against?"

"This is a fight in defence of democracy against autocracy of the most virulent type; a fight for the sacred right of free nations, large and small, to free development; a fight to remove the dangling sword of Damocles; a fight for good faith between nations and against turning sacred treaty obligations into scraps of paper; a fight against a great militaristic nation's desire to impose its yoke and its 'Kultur' upon the free nations of the world. In short it is a fight against a turning back of the clock for centuries and in defence of all that twentieth century civilization holds sacred—national and individual freedom.

"The story is told that a speaker at a great political gathering, in drawing a picture of a candidate who was a blind follower of party, described him as a man servant, a maid-servant, an ox and an ass for his party leaders. While his was a self imposed slavery, ours, though forced, would be none the less real and we would become hewers of wood and drawers of water for those with Prussian Junker ideals, were we to lose this war.

"We are bound to defend the rights of nations and the world's many Magna Chartas won through centuries of upward struggles.

"If we are to win this war, and before we deserve to win it, we at home must, individually and collectively, strive to serve as devotedly as those on active service. How can I best serve now? This is the vital question each must ask himself.

"We are told in no uncertain sound, by those in a position to speak, that the most urgent need is greater food production. In order to feed, not only the millions on active and semi-active service but the great civilian populations a swell. This war has taken possibly 40,000,000 men for active service besides the millions more as munition workers. These have ceased to be producers, but are heavy consumers, and we can readily understand what the effect of this is upon the production of foods and other necessities of life. It is estimated that the world's shortage of food during the current year will be so great that there will possibly be four to five millions of people die of sheer starvation.

"The problem then ceases, in a large measure, to be an economic one and resolves itself into a patriotic and humanitarian duty. What can I do to save civilization and reduce loss of life through increased food production? This is the question we must ask ourselves and strive to answer by individual and collective action.

"Let me suggest some lines of action for your consideration. If any of them appeal to you aim to act promptly and energetically. In towns and cities vacant lot associations might be formed. They could arrange to have vacant lots ploughed, harrowed and prepared for the growing of vegetables and where necessary even provide seed. Councils, Boards of Trade and other business organizations might act conjointly.

"Business men might, yea should, join hands with the banks in providing immediate easy credit to farmers to buy seed and even labor saving implements. Wheat, oats, potatoes and beans are most valuable crops to grow during the present year and a potato planter, for instance, would prove a great labor saver. Beans have a very

high food value and form an excellent substitute for meats, of which, at best, there will be a great scarcity. There are many farmers who would grow grain, potato and bean crops more largely if they had the means of securing the seed. Food supplies grown in Canada and the United States will prove much more valuable than those grown in Australia or India, on account of the shortage of tonnage and our proximity to Europe.

"If the farmers were given reasonable assurance that they could obtain help to harvest their crops, they would undoubtedly sow and plant more abundantly. Could you not make them a definite promise of say 200 or 300 men from St. John to help them out at harvest time and then organize to implement your product? Could you not either collectively or individually, as a contribution to the nation, supplement the wages paid by farmers to make them equal to the regular earnings of those who lend their assistance at harvest time? Perhaps you could render aid even during seeding time. Business men could aid in stressing the fact that there is such a shortage in the world's food supply that it will take some considerable time to catch up and that there need be no fear but that prices will be entirely satisfactory.

"There is a tremendous shortage in all kinds of food supplies—meats, cereals, etc.

"Prizes might be given to encourage increased production. One set of prizes might be given to encourage the greater production of food crops, both cereals and hoe crops.

"Another set of prizes might be given to the patrons of cheese factories and creameries to encourage the greater production of cheese and butter. A pound of cheese is equal to about two pounds of average meat.

"Let us forget all about the problem of supply and demand as an ordinary business proposition, in connection with the action we may take, and rise

to the higher level of patriotism and our duty to civilization and humanity. Who of you would withhold the gift of fifty or a hundred dollars if such a gift would save the life of a citizen of St. John? The call to us now is to be citizens of a much larger community, to be world citizens.

"Let me suggest in closing that wherever and whenever possible, you should co-operate with the Department of Agriculture in your efforts to assist

increased production. While the value of individual effort had that of single organizations are to be highly commended, yet there are many instances that will suggest themselves, in which combination of efforts will bring the largest results."

W. F. Hatheway was called upon to discuss the matter from a business man's standpoint. He said that he preferred to confine his discussion of the address to three phases, that of

financing the farmers, helping them to get the labor at harvest time, and lastly the increased production of cereals and vegetables generally. In Australia the value of the farmer was recognized to such an extent that he was given from twenty-five to thirty years to pay for the farm on easy terms with interest at from four and a half to five per cent. At least three of the states in Australia have state banks which institutions loaned the

farmers 50 per cent. of their improvements on easy terms. He thought if the local government would establish such banks in this province they would be of material advantage to the farmers next season as it was too late to be of any practical good this year.

Mr. Hatheway did not see that many laborers could go from the city to help the farmers with their harvest. The men were needed here in connection

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