

Honey Production

cannot come to our assistance under the price support legislation. The price today is far below the controlled price we had during the war. Another point is that with this large crop of honey on hand we find the retailers cautious about buying. Wholesalers who used to be in the habit of buying in two or three carload lots now buy 25 or 50 cases at a time, just to take care of their trade. If the price were stabilized, it would make a great difference to the industry. Since these beekeepers are unable to sell their honey, I do not need to tell the members of this house about the financial difficulties into which they are getting. With another season at hand some beekeepers have recently been liquidating their stocks and selling their honey at ridiculously low prices, sometimes below the cost of production.

Previous to the war we were able to find in Britain a market for our surplus honey. I believe about ten to fifteen per cent of our production was sent to that market. Today the honey business is up against the same difficulty as the apple grower and other primary producers. Britain has no dollars with which to buy honey. I suppose some syrup is available and honey is a little difficult to get.

A lot of our returned men have been taking their D.V.A. credits and establishing apiaries. It would be too bad if some of them were to get into financial difficulties at the start. I hope the minister and the government will see their way clear to giving the beekeepers help at this time. The government is not taking the same risk in buying honey as in buying other things because I believe I am safe in saying honey will keep almost indefinitely if it is kept under proper conditions. There will be lean years in the future. If the government took over some of the crop, stored it and brought it out during the lean years, I do not think any of the money so advanced would be lost.

The argument has been advanced at different times that beekeeping was only a sideline to farming. A reference to government statistics reveals that fifty-six per cent of the beekeepers in Canada today carry over one hundred colonies each. Beekeepers have a tremendous amount of equipment. If a man has only from two to ten colonies he can borrow the necessary equipment for extracting the honey. Whenever a man buys an extractor, honey tanks and so forth, he runs into a great deal of expense and immediately sets himself up in the honey business. It is no longer a sideline. Equipment bought during the war has been quite expensive.

Quoting from a report by the dominion bureau of statistics, it shows that Manitoba

[Mr. Bryce.]

—I can talk better about that province than any other—in 1948 had 3,420 beekeepers who operated 75,000 colonies of bees. These colonies produced 6,525,000 pounds of honey and 97,000 pounds of beeswax. I do not want to take up any more time, and I have only raised this question while I had this opportunity for the benefit of the government benches. I wish more of them had been present. The minister knows the situation and I hope you gentlemen on the front benches will support the minister in any attempt he may make to do something about this situation.

To sum up, I would say that the surplus is evidently temporary, as many of the beekeepers are reducing their colonies or dropping out of the business. The industry responded to the wartime necessity for honey by a greater production. A sudden change in the market requirements left the beekeepers holding surplus unsold honey. Most of the commercial men are in a precarious financial condition as they enter a new season of production. Without assistance, the price will inevitably drop below the cost of production and ruin many beekeepers. This would be particularly objectionable in view of the fact the purchase of a reasonable amount of honey by the dominion government would prevent a serious price drop and would assist the beekeepers in carrying on during the present period of adjustment with some degree of security. Again, I should like to appeal to the minister and his colleagues on the front benches to try to do something for the beekeepers of Canada.

COAL AND STEEL INDUSTRY IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Mr. Rodney Young (Vancouver Centre): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take up very much of the time of the house. This evening I have listened to the member for Cumberland (Mr. Black) deliver a very interesting and, to me at least, very praiseworthy address on behalf of a canal known as the Chignecto canal down in his part of the country. I also heard the member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) dwell at some length on the coal situation. I was struck by the attitude which was taken which would imply that the maritime provinces were in the nature of step-children of confederation. They seem to feel they receive little or no consideration in comparison with the central provinces of our country.

Coming as I do from British Columbia, I am immediately struck by the similarity of the position of British Columbia as a province to that of our unfortunate sisters on the eastern seaboard. Sometimes we too have the feeling that we are the step-daughters of confederation. As every member of this