



LIBRARY OF PARLIAMENT

THE WORLD FAMINE
AND
THE DUTY OF CANADA

by
John S. Ewart, K.C.
Ottawa, Ont.

HC 79

F3

E9

A limited number of
copies of this booklet
may be secured free
of charge by applying
to the Author

The World Famine

and

The Duty of Canada

FACTS.—In my recent pamphlet, "The Disruption of Canada," I quoted authority to prove:

1. "That the world faces a food situation that is nothing short of appalling" (*Dr. Robertson*).

2. "That the world's supply of food is not sufficient to feed the world's armies and the civilian population too" (*Lord Northcliffe*).

3. "That it is now vital for the United Kingdom and the Allies in Europe to obtain from Canada foodstuffs in far larger quantities than under peace conditions" (*Lord Rhondda*).

"That unless the Allies in Europe are able to import the supplies necessary for feeding their armies and their civil populations, victory may slip from our united grasp" (*Lord Rhondda*).

4. That "the fighting efficiency of the Allied forces will be impaired unless Canada awakens to the seriousness of the food problem" (*Mr. Hanna*).

5. That "what we ask from the United States and Canada, we cannot procure elsewhere" (*Lord Rhondda*).

6. "That the Allies are depending on the continent of North America to a far greater extent than ever before" (*Can. Food Bulletin No. 3*).

7. "That there are difficulties in the way. One of them is the shortness of help, which is a very serious question" (*Mr. Crerar*).

8. That the shortage of food is "owing to the shortage

of labor caused by the war.....labor has been taken away from the farm, which has produced varying harvests with the result that there is a world shortage of food" (Lord Northcliffe).

9. That the shortage in the wheat crop of the western European allies for this year is 570,000,000 bushels; that Canada and the United States together can supply only 200,000,000; and that the allies' shortage is therefore 370,000,000 bushels.

10. That, notwithstanding those well-known facts, the Borden government had, to the 30th June last, enlisted for service in Europe 45,797 farmers, of whom 24,592 came from the western Provinces.

11. And that, in view of the fact that the United States is ready to ship more men to the front than can be transported, all suggestion of necessity for conscription in Canada is absolutely foundationless.

OPINIONS.—I quoted also noteworthy opinion as to the duty of Canada under these circumstances:

1. "That the Government should, without delay, endeavour to encourage the breaking of a large acreage of wild lands in order that such new soil may be ready for cultivation next year and our productive capacity thereby increased" (Senate Committee).

That "the shortage of farm labour must be met, and the method of meeting it must be prompt and decisive, if our production of wheat and other cereals is to be maintained, let alone increased" (Senate Committee).

2. "That an increased export of food supplies must entail diversion of effort from other enterprise" (Lord Rhondda).

3. That the greatest encouragement to the Allies will be rendered "in utilizing every ounce of national energy to increase production" (Lord Rhondda).

4. That "we should use all the experience we have thus far gained in planning and carrying forward a campaign for larger acreages, and higher yields in 1918, and the years that are to follow" (Dr. Robertson).

MORE FACTS.—In order to emphasize some of the foregoing facts—to prove the increasing dependence of our Allies upon Canada for food, I add the following table: (a)

FRANCE

Average production of wheat for the five years preceding the war.....	317 639 000
Production of 1916.....	214 624 000
Estimated for 1917.....	161 670 000

ITALY

Average production for the five years.....	183 336 000
Production of 1916.....	176 531 000
Estimated for 1917.....	147 000 000

BELGIUM

Average production for the five years.....	14 896 000
Production for 1916.....	11 917 000
Estimated for 1917.....	9 000 000

Combined, these figures show a reduction from the ante-war period of.....	515 871 000
to the 1917 product of.....	317 670 000

a total reduction of.....	198 201 000
---------------------------	-------------

or more than 38 per cent. The figures of this war-caused reduction, added to the normal shortage of those countries and the United Kingdom, are presented to Canada with entreaties for her devotion to food production.

CANADA'S POSITION.—Probably nobody doubts the accuracy of the facts and opinions above supplied. They make most unmistakably clear that in relation to the most momentous of all possible questions—more food or certain famine—Canada has suddenly found herself to be the most important factor in the world. Supplies for the allies from eastern Europe, there are none. Supplies from Australia and South Africa cannot be moved. Lord Rhondda says:

“What we ask from the United States and Canada, we cannot procure elsewhere.”

And as between these two countries, the exportable wheat for this year is (in bushels)

Canada.....	154 000 000
United States.....	53 000 000

(a) These figures are taken from *The Agricultural Gazette*, Sept. 1917. p. 840.

Canada, I say, is, in this respect, the most important factor in the world. She has illimitable areas of choicest lands all ready for the plough. She could add enormously to her exportable surplus in a single year. She could save vast numbers of persons from famine, and thousands from death. She could help materially to preserve a falling world from anarchy and overwhelming ruin. She could do all this — if she tried to do it.

SIR ROBERT BORDEN.—And why does she not try? Ask Sir Robert Borden. His utter disregard of facts, warnings, and beseechings has been to me a matter of the most constant amazement. Read his manifestoes and speeches. They are, from a literary, debating, and election standpoint, very creditable performances. But read them over again, and see if you can detect in them either the remotest reference to the one question to which he ought to be devoting his great ability, or the slightest evidence of appreciation of Canada's duty to her troops and to her allies. Do you, or do you not, Sir Robert, agree with Mr. Sidney Webb's recent article entitled "The World Famine into which we are hurrying" (a)? Do you, or do you not believe that in many places famine is already at work? You are a busy man, Sir Robert, but can you not pause for a moment and read some of the piteous entreaties which come to you from all quarters? In my mail this morning I find *Pro Belgica*, of 30 November. It makes heart-rending reading, and the perusal of it compels me once more to appeal from you to the electors. Would to heaven that you yourself would read it, and make appeal unnecessary; Baron Moncheur, head of the Belgian Mission to the United States, says as follows:

"Those of our men who can find work to do often give out on account of insufficient nourishment. Physical resistance to sickness has been greatly diminished by reason of this state of semi-starvation, and the mortality rate has been enormously increased. I have seen statistics indicating that the mortality rate for the first three months of 1917 among workmen was three and a half times greater than the average rate for the same period in previous years. Every day the bread line becomes longer and longer. One of the agents of the Commission for Relief reports that in a certain district in Belgium applicants for the daily soup ration increased from 60,000 to 400,000 in two months.

A short time ago a member for relief visited a town of 1,000 population and singled a number of homes of the working people

(a) *Contemporary Rev.* October, 1917.

at random. This investigation showed:

1. THAT THE PEOPLE WERE ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON THE RATIONS OF THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF, WITH LITTLE OR NO NOURISHMENT IN THE WAY OF NATIVE FOOD-STUFFS.

2. THAT THE RATION FROM THE RELIEF COMMISSION WAS OFTEN EATEN IN ADVANCE BY MANY FAMILIES, SO THAT THE SEMI-WEEKLY BREAD RATION WOULD NOT LAST UNTIL THE NEXT ONE CAME AROUND. IN THIS WAY THOUSANDS WOULD GO FOR MORE THAN ONE DAY, A WEEK WITHOUT FOOD IN THE HOUSE.

3. THAT AS A GENERAL RULE TWO SCANT MEALS A DAY WERE EATEN, AND THE FAMILIES WENT TO BED EARLY IN THE EVENING TO SHUN THE PANGS OF HUNGER.

4. THAT AS A GENERAL RULE THE WOMEN AND OLDER CHILDREN (NOT ADMITTED TO THE "SOUPES SCOLAIRES") SUFFERED ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THEY WERE OBLIGED TO GIVE A PART OF THEIR DAILY FOOD BREAD RATION TO THE FATHER, WHO REQUIRED THIS TO GIVE HIM STRENGTH TO DO HIS DAILY WORK.

5. THAT THE WORKING MEN WERE IN AN EMACIATED AND GREATLY WEAKENED CONDITION BECAUSE THEIR WORK WAS USING UP THEIR BODIES FASTER THAN THEIR SCANT FOOD SUPPLY COULD REPLACE THIS SPENT ENERGY.

"It is needless to talk of the prices of foodstuffs in Belgium. To know that they are prohibitive is sufficient. I was informed just before I was leaving that practically no meat was available. In London, Paris and Rome they have what they call meatless days. IN BELGIUM EVERY DAY IS A MEATLESS DAY."

"MANY A BABY HAS DIED IN BELGIUM CITIES FOR LACK OF MILK, which used to come from the country near by." (a).

IF CANADA HAD HELPED.—If, Sir Robert, you had taken the advice of your Senate of last session, Canada would be to-day well on the way to modify, in very material degree, the helpless misery of thousands of those poor Belgians, whose only crime is that they saved France, from a horde of treaty-breaking ruffians. And if you had done what Mr. Burrell's "**Agricultural War Book**" of two years before plainly pointed to as your duty, you would already have mitigated the miseries of those whose pleading hands have been stretching towards you. You would have performed a service to Canada and the Allies, for which millions of your fellow beings would now be calling you blessed.

(a) *That is Belgium. From Serbia, for more than two years, have come such statements as: "Many dying of starvation here." "Millions of people starving in Serbia," accompanied by insistent entreaties.*

WAR BOOK OF 1915.—Allow me to remind you of the contents of that "Agricultural War Book." The Premier of Nova Scotia said:

"A solemn duty has been laid upon your shoulders as farmers. You are expected to enlarge the output of your farms while not only maintaining but, wherever possible, increasing their productive power. I cannot emphasize too strongly the fact that **THIS WORK IS JUST AS TRULY PRACTICAL PATRIOTISM AS IS THE WORK OF THE SOLDIER IN THE TRENCHES.** Our kinsmen in the Motherland have to be fed, so do also the people of the countries devastated by war" (p. 9).

The Minister of Agriculture of New Brunswick said:

"One of the most effective means by which the people of New Brunswick can at the present time give evidence of their loyalty and their desire to assist is by a united effort to **PUT UNDER CULTIVATION ALL THE AVAILABLE FARM LANDS POSSIBLE,** in order that we may do our share towards relieving the burden by being in a position to supply those who are now nearer the scenes of active service" (p. 11).

The Premier of Ontario said:

"**THE FARMER AT WORK IN THE FIELD IS DOING AS MUCH IN THIS CRISIS AS THE MAN WHO GOES TO THE FRONT**" (p. 15.).

And Mr. Burrell himself said:

"**THE GOVERNMENT IS STRONGLY IMPRESSED WITH THE DESIRABILITY OF INCREASING THE CROP ACREAGE IN CANADA.** The Canadian farmer, earnestly bending all his energies to increase the food supply for the Britisher at home and the British soldiers at the front, is **DOING HIS SHARE IN THE GIGANTIC STRUGGLE OF THE EMPIRE**" (p. 3).

"**THERE IS ONLY ONE CLASS OF LABOUR AS HONORABLE AND AS INDISPENSABLE AS THAT OF THE FIGHTING MAN IN TIMES OF WAR, AND THAT IS THE LABOUR OF THE MAN WHO PROVIDES THE FOOD SUPPLY.** A proper recognition of this fact, and of the supreme dignity and importance of agricultural labour, should help materially in the difficult process of **TRANSFERRING DISPLACED CITY WORKERS IN THE FIELDS AND PASTURES**" (p. 98).

In a special article (pp. 97-100), Mr. Burrell summarized the situation, and its practical necessities, as follows:

"**Many farmers, East, Centre, and West, place THE LACK OF SUITABLE OR COMPETENT LABOUR AS THE GREATEST DIFFICULTY IN INCREASING FARM PRODUCTION**" (p. 97).

After referring to "the large surplus of labourers in the cities and towns," the article proceeded:

"MANY OF OUR HOME SUPPLY HAVE ENLISTED AND GONE TO THE FRONT. WHAT THEN ARE WE TO DO? We shall have to depend mainly on the workers now in Canada. THE COUNTRY WANTS MEN AND THE CITIES HAVE LARGE NUMBERS OF UNEMPLOYED. It is largely, then A QUESTION OF GETTING THE MEN TO THE WORK. City and country are equally interested."

"There are two difficulties here—one is the shortage of men skilled in farm work and the other is THE LACK OF MACHINERY OR ORGANIZATION in the locating of men" (p. 97).

"A WELL SELECTED COMMITTEE."—The situation and the problem being thus well stated, the remedy was obvious, namely, that the government should supply "the lack of machinery or organisation." That is clear. But what did the government propose? This merely:

"APPOINT A WELL SELECTED COMMITTEE composed of both city men and country men to take the matter up. . . . Men are volunteering to organize to raise money and food to send abroad. Why not volunteer to organize to help produce more food? PERHAPS IF TWO OR THREE WOMEN INTERESTED AND EXPERIENCED IN WOMEN'S INSTITUTE WORK WERE PLACED ON SUCH A COMMITTEE SOMETHING WOULD BE DONE" (p. 98).

WRETCHED HELPLESSNESS.—Did ever, during all time, a government write itself down as so utterly and wretchedly helpless? Here is a matter of overwhelming importance; a matter upon which the fighting capacity of ourselves and our allies depends; a matter (without exaggeration) of life and death to thousands of humanbeings; a matter of the greatest difficulty and complexity; a matter which requires not only co-ordinated effort over the whole of the Dominion, but legal authority to make men move from places where they deem themselves comfortable, to places where they shall be made useful; and the Borden government contents itself with the emission of a suggestion for a voluntary "well selected committee," and of a hope that if two or three women "were placed on such a committee something would be done."

NOTHING DONE—"Something" was not done. The "well

selected committee" was never selected. There was nobody to select it. The article informed the farmers that they

"Should realize that they must offer wages and home conditions that will be attractive" (p. 98).

That is not the method by which the government proposes to send men to Flanders.

FEEDING THE FIGHTERS.—On another page of the pamphlet, under the very appropriate heading "**Feeding the Fighters,**" is the following:

"Our soldiers fighting at the front **MUST BE FED.** An army fights on its stomach. Their families waiting and watching at home **MUST BE FED.** The reserves in camp **MUST BE FED.** The sailors on the high seas **MUST BE FED.** The industrial workers of Great Britain **MUST BE FED.** Who will provide the food, who will produce it? The appeal comes to Canada. Shall we do our share? Our best will not be too much" (p. 129).

"Must be fed." "Must be fed." "Must be fed." And the government ventures so far as to suggest the selection, by some unselected person, of "a well selected committee." It does unfortunately, more than that, for it makes useless the work of any committee, no matter how well selected, by sending the only available labor supply to Flanders.

"WHO WILL PROVIDE THE FOOD, WHO WILL PRODUCE IT?"

asks Mr. Burrell, and Sir Robert replies, in effect:

"I DON'T KNOW. I INTEND TO SEND THE AVAILABLE WORKERS TO FLANDERS."

WAR BOOK OF 1916.—In 1916, Mr. Burrell issued another "**Agricultural War Book,**" with further insistence upon the imperative necessity of greater production. Statements similar to those above quoted were made by the Minister of Agriculture of Quebec, by the Minister of Agriculture of British Columbia, and by others. Mr. Burrell himself said:

"The shortage of European-grown food in 1916 is therefore likely to be a serious factor in the world's grain markets. It is not unlikely that continental Europe will **EXPERIENCE FAMINE CONDITIONS BEFORE NEXT SUMMER IS OVER**" (p. 28).

NO WAR BOOK, 1917.—To go on repeating from year to year declarations as to "**imperative duty,**" "**pressing obligation,**"

"the patriotic farmer's first duty," and so on, being far too ridiculous for Mr. Burrell's sense of propriety, he stopped issuing his war-books. Forty-five thousand farmers, moreover, had already been taken from the farms, and the possibility of getting other help had been ended by the conscription bill.

THE QUESTION.—The great question, then, for Canada is, whether she will persist in doing that which is absolutely unnecessary, or will make favorable reply to the calls which come to her for food; *for more food*; **FOR STILL MORE FOOD.** In view of the indisputable fact that the question as to troops from the United States is not, "**How many troops can be raised?**" but, "**How many of them can be transported?**" I repeat the question of my former pamphlet.

"CAN ANYBODY SUGGEST ANY REASON (OTHER THAN A SENTIMENTAL ONE) WHY CANADA SHOULD COMPETE WITH THE UNITED STATES FOR PLACES IN THE TRANSPORT SHIPS, RATHER THAN EMPLOY HER MEN IN FOOD PRODUCTION?"

HOGS.—In an official account of a meeting called by Mr. Crerar (26 October last) is the following reference to a speech by Mr. Hanna:

"He referred to REPRESENTATIONS THAT HAD BEEN RECEIVED FROM FRANCE AND OTHER BELLIGERENT NATIONS RELATING TO THE URGENCY OF THEIR NEEDS, and said that it was known that the swine-herds of Europe had been decreased since the war commenced by 32,425,000 head. Even if the Allies were to kill the greater proportion of their hogs they could not meet their own demands. Even in the United States the production could not be much more than would meet the requirements of the home market" (a).

Couple that with the following in Pamphlet No. 21 of the Department of Agriculture, Live Stock Branch:

"We are in danger of snatching at the ant hill and missing the mountain. We have taken advantage of the good prices that have ruled since the advent of the war—and rightly so. **BUT WE HAVE MADE NO DEFINITE EFFORTS TO PROVIDE FOR THE FUTURE. UNLESS SOME DETERMINED POLICY OF EXPANSION IS ACTED UPON AT THIS OPPORTUNE TIME,** our swine industry, which has already dwindled to dangerous proportions, may degenerate into **NOTHING BETTER THAN A LOCAL TRADE. IT IS TIME TO PULL UP; UNCONSCIOUSLY WE HAVE BEEN SLIPPING DOWN HILL AT A TREMENDOUS RATE**" (b).

(a) *The Agricultural Gazette of Canada*, November, 1917, P. 9555.

(b) P. 2.

If the "well selected committee," with two or three women in it, had got to work in 1915, "something" might have been done—and probably would have been. There was nobody to select it. "Unconsciously we have been slipping down hill." And there was nobody even looking at us.

FOOD PRICES.—Offering, at present, no protest against the ever-soaring food prices, so far as they affect individuals amongst ourselves, let me remind readers of two facts:

1. Present prices are verging upon famine figures; already, they are being restrained only by governmental action; and they can be reduced only by tremendously increased production.

2. As prices rise, famine commences with those persons least able to pay them. Famine first assails the poor, and revolution usually follows fast upon famine.

Amazement at Lord Lansdowne's recent letter would be somewhat tempered if people realized the rapidity of the world-slide towards anarchy, and if they were aware of the methods being adopted by governments everywhere to retard the momentum. I have not space enough to describe the European situation, I quote only two sentences from Mr. Webb's recent article (a).

"Thus, the government has already made itself the sole importer of cereals into the British Isles, a colossal business; already it controls every flour mill in the United Kingdom, and determines exactly what kind of flour is to be made, and at what price it is to be sold; and it has definitely fixed the retail price of bread (henceforth not to be raised whatever may be the price of wheat in Chicago) at ninepence per quartern loaf. IT HAS HAD TO TAKE THIS ACTION, INVOLVING FINANCIAL DEALINGS TO THE EXTENT, LITERALLY, OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED MILLION POUNDS ANNUALLY, IN ORDER TO PREVENT GRAVE LABOUR UNREST" (a).

Under such circumstances, is not the line of Canada's duty unmistakeably clear? I do not exaggerate when I say that a lengthened prolongation of the war may mean disruption elsewhere than in Russia and Canada; that, short of disruption, it may mean undue haste to arrange inadvisable terms of peace; that the only security against one or both of these evils is at tremendous increase in food-production; and that IT IS TO CAN-

(a) *Contemporary Rev.* October, 1917.

ADA CHIEFLY THAT THE ALLIES LOOK FOR THEIR
SUSTENANCE AND SALVATION.

REPLIES TO PREVIOUS PAMPHLETS.

MR. BOURASSA.—I have received various sorts of replies to my recent pamphlet, **The Disruption of Canada**, ranging all the way from pleasant proposals for my death by cholroform to a reference to a slip of the printer. The only one which appears to require public notice is that I am in league with Mr. Bourassa; or, as another gentleman puts it: "**Ewart is an English Bourassa,**" or, as a newspaper declares: Ewart "**belongs to the Bourassa family.**" To people who so say, I have two answers:

First: If it were true that I am in league, not only with Mr. Bourassa, but with the Kaiser, and the devil, would that fact obliterate or modify any other fact—for example, any of the facts contained in my pamphlet?

Secondly: Not only am I not in league with Mr. Bourassa, but I do not in the least agree with his attitude towards the war. In so saying, I merely repeat what, on 1 December 1916, I said in a letter to Mr. Bourassa himself. He had asked me for a condensation of an address which I had delivered to the Reform Club in Montreal. I replied as follows:

"Dear Mr. Bourassa:—

I could not adapt what I said at the Reform Club to a written article without more time than is at my disposal now, and I am not at all sure that if I did, it would meet with your approbation. I am afraid that we view present circumstances from a different angle, and perhaps you will permit me to say that I have very much regretted the course which you have, I have no doubt conscientiously, adopted.

I should not think it at all right at the present time to say anything that would tend to distract our people during the stress of war. To me, the first requisite is solidarity, and, for that purpose, necessarily the subordination of the many conflicting things and ideas which would affect that solidarity. After the war is over, all those interested, not only in its cause or purpose but in the history of wars in general, will have much to engage their attention, and quite possibly I shall not be amongst the silent ones when the right time arrives. Meanwhile I would hope that we would all

contribute to the success of what our country—yours and mine—has almost unanimously agreed to adopt.”

That letter indicates the attitude which I adopted on 4 August 1914; and I have not as yet seen the least symptom of a reason for changing it. Because of it I immediately stopped issuing *The Kingdom Papers*. And it is, I am glad to think, the attitude of both of our political leaders. The correctness of Sir Robert Borden's motives is, to my mind, unquestionable; but, nevertheless, I am most profoundly convinced that what he is doing is the very opposite of what he ought to do, in order that he might effectively contribute to our success in the present struggle. For he is not only shaking to its very foundations the integrity of Canada, but, at the same time, he is robbing her of a splendid opportunity of doing world service in the fight with “the world famine into which we are hurrying.”

4 Dec. 1917.

JOHN S. EWART.

OTTAWA, ONT.



THE SIMMONS PRINTING COMPANY LIMITED, OTTAWA.



38168

143

