

LABOR SHORTAGE! ACUTE ON FARMS

Western M.P.'s Urge Matter on the Attention of Par- liament

Ottawa, July 18.—Shortage of farm labor in Western Canada is most acute. Mr. J. G. Turriff (Assinibola) brought the situation to the attention of Parliament this afternoon, reading extracts from western papers and telegraphic communications received urging prompt action. Some of the papers suggested the conscription of **alien** laborers and slackers for the western harvest fields, and others intimated that men from Quebec declined to serve as harvesters this season in reprisal for western Parliamentary support of conscription.

Premier Borden replied that the *Government was aware of the serious situation.* Through the Department of the Interior negotiations were going on with the United States for co-operation in the supply of labor. A conference of varied interests has been had in Ottawa last Saturday, as a result of which he had sent out an appeal for assistance.

Mr. W. A. Buchanan (Medicine Hat) spoke of the serious conditions in southern Alberta, and suggested that a supply of farm labor be organized by the Dominion and Provincial Governments.

Hon. Dr. Roche, Minister of the Interior, detailed the international plans being worked out with the United States, under which forces of farm laborers would move north. He had no faith in the proposal to conscript **alien enemies** and slackers. Such a course was taking the horse to the water but not making him drink.

Hon. Frank Oliver asked if the Minister had given consideration to the statement of Colonel Arthurs that there were 12,500 officers and men in England who were not going to the front. Most of these might be utilized in the wheat fields. Dr. Roche thought it was a matter for the Militia Department.

Hon. Charles Marcell asked if, in view of conditions, it was proposed to suspend the operation of the conscription bill. Dr. Roche replied in the negative.

Mr. James Robb, Huntingdon, spoke sharply. The suggestion that Quebec was not sending harvesters in retaliation for conscription was, he said, only in line with a lot of misrepresentation of Quebec, which has spoiled much paper and ink in this country. Farmers in Quebec, to his knowledge, were badly in need of farm help for the hay fields. They were offering as high as \$5 per day, and in many cases the women were working. Many farmers had likewise had to lessen their herds because of the lack of labor.

Messrs. Levi Thomson (Qu'Appelle) and E. W. Nesbitt (North Oxford) emphasized the existing shortage.