

SUBJECT

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REMARKS

ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT
VICTORIA, B.C.

30

CITY of VANCOUVER

AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

Brief prepared by the Special Committee
of the City Council of the City of Van-
couver, dealing with the Agricultural
Situation; for presentation to the
Executive Council of British Columbia.

Vancouver, B.C.
Feb. 1st, 1943

3/

CITY of VANCOUVER

To the Honourable the Premier,
and Members of the Executive Council
of British Columbia,
VICTORIA, B. C.

Sirs:

BRIEF RE AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

(Submitted by the Special Committee of the
Council of the City of Vancouver)

At a recent interview between your Minister of Agriculture, the Hon. K.C. MacDonald and representatives of the Market Committee from the Vancouver City Council, it was suggested by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, that owing to the pressing importance of the matter under discussion, i.e., the coming crisis in agricultural production, the honour of meeting your Cabinet and the privilege of presenting our views was arranged and now deeply appreciated.

The problem of the efficient distribution of manpower into their proper channels is now one of the chief administrative worries of Canada. Splendid work has been done in the recruiting of personnel for the army, navy and airforce, but this has made inroads into the supply of workers needed for forest, mine and farm.

During a recent visit of the Hon. Mr. Gardiner, Minister of Agriculture for the Dominion, a delegation appointed by the Vancouver City Council waited upon the Honourable Minister and discussed this problem. At this interview Mr. Gardiner expressed the wish that the Provincial Government be joined with the City Council of Vancouver. By doing so, it would lend, he said, a greater emphasis to these aggravating difficulties, and by co-operating in some practical way, help the parent government in suggesting some solution.

Naturally it is impossible in a brief sketch to outline the importance of this problem in relation to this modern crisis. To enumerate the manifold phases, political, constitutional, economic, and military, which it necessarily displays is an impossibility at the moment; consequently, an attempt merely to describe one or two features and factors essential to an understanding will be made.

The logic of facts proving the necessity of high agricultural production is unanswerable. The population of British Columbia, centered particularly in Vancouver, has increased so rapidly that it is already difficult to find food for the extra mouths. More hands on more acres means more produce.

Industry has grown at a stupendous rate. Food must also fight along with factory -- a defensive movement for higher production of farm products is self-preservation, and in the second place an offensive movement directed against the common enemy. As ex-President Hoover recently remarked: "If we cannot keep our agricultural production in a high state of perfection to feed our own people now - how can we expect to help feed the world after the war?" This in a degree applies to our own Country.

British Columbia's contribution to the production and strength of its fighting food is not found in what she possesses in climate and land but in what we can effectively produce.

Nature has blessed and endowed this Province with great agricultural possibilities. Surely common sense will not be rationed to such an extent that its vast potential production will have to be classed with scarce commodities such as gas, rubber, coffee, tea, etc.

To obtain the maximum production of protective foods such as meats, eggs, milk, fresh vegetables and fruits -- foods which go to protect the health of soldiers and civilians, it will be necessary to produce from twenty to twenty-five per cent more than before the war. This is a natural consequence, resulting from increased population and additional people at work. As more money is made and energy expended it simply means more eating and more money for food.

The men and women of our armed forces are heavy eaters. They are among the best fed people in the world. As of old the armies travel on their stomachs, and as our armed forces grow, so does the need for food. We have been and are exporting vast quantities of food, including fruit, to the British Isles, and that much of this has been lost, through submarine activity, in transit. Consequently the job of producing food is a big one -- bigger in fact, than ever before in the history of our country. Yes, food is at war and fights along with the factory in our all-out effort.

British Columbia's growing concern at the moment is primarily based on reduced markets and general uncertainty in the production of fruits and vegetables. In particular we face again this Spring and Summer a crucial shortage of labour, which is leading again, like last Summer, to the sacrifice of valuable crops of apples, cherries, peaches, raspberries, strawberries and fresh vegetables.

While we are making great strides in the productive energies of war, it saddens us to think that in all this there is the crippling fact that our farm production is out of gear. We should so equate the production of commodities, that with reasonable care, a decreased supply may not unduly lower our standard of living.

In this all-out total war the real weakness it seems is to keep the farmers out of it, by taking them from their natural occupation to another where their expert knowledge and experience is lost. Many farmers have left for the armed forces and war industries, while difficulty has been experienced in replacing them. Naturally the result has been the slaughtering of dairy herds for meat, a diminution of poultry raising and a general deficit in vegetables and other foods.

As a consequence, one of the most insistent problems confronting the City of Vancouver, owing to the lack of selective service in this emergency -- is to adequately feed our citizens who constitute over a third of the population of British Columbia, and with ample supplies close at hand face a famine. Or are we going to permit someone to muscle in on this part of our lives, with a bright cheery smile, and say it is better to eat less, when it can be sensibly arranged to eat more?

As an expedient to remedy this approaching crisis we favour the drafting of women for employment in market gardening, horticulture, dairy and poultry work. They are apt too, and efficient, especially in fruit picking, sorting, grading and sanitary methods. In Britain, similar work for women is an accomplished fact. To a degree our feet are set on the same road and it remains to be seen whether the authorities will observe the sane recommendations of representative women.

Failing this and as the nation is calling on her farmers for substantial increases, we must start at once to place the right men in the right place to get the right things done. If farmers are a measure of a nation's strength, we must choose on the one hand an expanding food supply or additional manpower for the armed forces. Owing to Canada's limited population we certainly cannot have both.

We respectfully pointed out at the beginning that in such a short analysis, no attempt has been made to deal with this absorbing question in all its ramifications. On the other hand it is undoubtedly well-known to you all that there are other ways and means, latent manpower, etc., not touched upon in this review, such as:-

33

Agricultural Brief (3)

1. Farm subsidies
2. Direction of Oriental Labour
3. Conscientious Objectors
4. Enemy aliens.

Now, in all this we fully appreciate that great emphasis is laid by both sides of the question on the testimony of experts. Experts sometimes disagree, and in the confusion, ordinary laymen are tempted to express their views.

In taking the liberty to express our views, we feel they should be wisely limited or not at all, because insistence upon them might cause greater harm to higher interests.

We end, therefore, and humbly submit the following conclusions:

FIRST: That we all should know definitely the kind of work expected to help win this war.

SECOND: Briefly there are two kinds of work -
(a) The one we are actually doing;
(b) The one we probably should be doing better in order to win.

THIRD: When our chosen representatives enact the necessary laws, we shall be in the kind of work we should be doing -- whether it be on the farm, in the factory or in the forces.

Finally, may we add the wish common to all the sections of Canada -- that if such selective laws are enacted they will strengthen and broaden our purpose, guarantee abundance to our armed forces here and abroad, combat civilian unrest and prevent the spread of unhappiness and discontent among the farmers.

Respectfully submitted,

SPECIAL COMMITTEE on AGRICULTURAL SITUATION

John Price (Chairman)
ALDERMAN

George Procombe
ALDERMAN

H. F. Corey
ALDERMAN

W. A. McLaughlin
MARKET COMMISSIONER

34

CITY
CLERK'S OFFICE
FRED HOWLETT, J.P.
CITY CLERK



TELEPHONE FAIRMONT 2711

VANCOUVER, B.C.

February 3, 1943.

The Honourable R. L. Maitland, K.C.,
Attorney-General,
Parliament Buildings,
Victoria, B. C.

Dear Sir:

Re The Agricultural Situation

A Special Committee of the Vancouver City Council, of which Alderman Jack Price is Chairman, has prepared a brief on the above subject, copy of which I enclose.

It is desired that a small delegation be given an opportunity to present the brief to the Executive Council, and I have transmitted a request by this mail to the Office of the Provincial Secretary that arrangements be made accordingly.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fred Howlett".
City Clerk.

BHW:W
Encl.