

*Wheat Acreage Reduction Act*

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Who is to be the judge of the loss of productivity?

Mr. HANSELL: In my constituency there is a tremendous amount of land that is not cultivated or in summer-fallow owing to soil drifting conditions. In some instances the land is left untouched for an entire year. Would this be regarded as abandoned land? I have had some difficulty in getting payments through on account of this fact. It was not thought wise to summer-fallow this land by reason of soil drifting.

Mr. GARDINER: Paragraph (j) of section 2 of the act reads:

(j) "summer-fallow" means the cultivation or management of fallow land in such a way as to conserve soil moisture or to prevent soil drifting, or both.

The amendment is intended to cover just such cases as the hon. member for Macleod has in mind, but in order to prove whether land is abandoned or whether it is in summer-fallow a person must be able to show that his plan of operation is being carried on by other persons in the community.

Mr. WRIGHT: It seems to me that the definition of productivity is rather wide. Is there any regulation covering this that could be issued to the inspectors so that the method used might be uniform over the whole area?

Mr. GARDINER: I think we have to depend pretty largely upon the judgment and the common sense of the inspectors. Where there is any dispute about it, we generally send in a second man to reinspect.

Section agreed to.

On section 2—Basic wheat acreage or basic acreages.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): I do not know whether my knowledge of sentence structure is bad, but this section seems to be poorly worded. I can see what it means, but it is a most difficult sentence to follow. It reads:

The basic wheat acreage or the basic acreages in summer-fallow, coarse grains or grass on any farm consisting in any year of lands not operated as a unit in the year 1940 or, where there was no wheat acreage thereon in the year 1940, in the year 1939, shall be computed in the manner set out in subsections one, two and three of this section as if such lands had been operated as a unit in the year 1940, or where there was no wheat acreage thereon in the year 1940, in the year 1939.

Mr. GARDINER: I must say that when I read that, I went back and read it the second time, but I finally came to the same conclusion as the hon. member for Weyburn, that I knew what it meant after I read it. These

[Mr. Gardiner.]

regulations and this legislation have been changed so much that quite often after we got through with them they did not mean what we wanted them to mean. I would hesitate to change the wording because I think it means just what it is intended to mean.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): What does it mean?

Mr. GARDINER: It means that we are not going back of 1940 as the basic year, unless there is not any wheat in 1940, and then we go to 1939. If it becomes necessary to take 1939, then you have to adjust your other crops as well as wheat to 1939 instead of 1940.

Mr. FAIR: There are cases where people attempted to cooperate with the government, and the result was that in 1939 they had considerable wheat in crop. Then in 1940 they cut down their acreages. What would their position be?

Mr. GARDINER: What the bill says is that if there is no wheat in 1940, then we take 1939.

Mr. FAIR: What I meant was that if on a quarter-section a man had fifteen or twenty acres in 1940, and in 1939, before the wheat acreage reduction measure was brought into effect, he had, say, a hundred acres on the quarter-section, he would be penalized for cooperating with the government.

Mr. GARDINER: We provided for that in the regulations of 1941. That is what gave us all the difficulty in making payments. We tried to correct the few cases where probably a small percentage of people were involved, and in doing so we made it difficult for the other ninety per cent or whatever it might have been. We had to try to cover all cases where adjustment might be necessary, and making those adjustments involved us in all kinds of complications. When the farmer got his return back he said, "I never did have that number of acres of coarse grains", or "I never did have that number of acres in summer-fallow at any time", and by the time we got through trying to explain to him we were in the middle of the next summer.

Mr. FAIR: What these farmers will say is, "We have tried to cooperate with the government, and now we are paying the price, by way of reduction of wheat acreage reduction bonus."

Mr. GARDINER: That will be true in some cases.

Section 2 agreed to.