

adequate measures to assure farmers of a stable income and a stable pattern of production and farm organization for future years.

Mr. R. R. Southam (Qu'Appelle-Moose Mouniain): Mr. Speaker, the hour is getting late, and I shall keep my remarks brief because many of the problems relating to the acreage reduction plan have already been gone over in the debate. The wheat acreage reduction plan that we are discussing this evening is negative. It is an admission of failure. This program that was announced last Friday by the minister who speaks for the Canadian Wheat Board is an unquestionable admission of the government's failure to sell wheat.

The wheat sales statistics available at the moment indicate that Canadian wheat sales to date are down 31 per cent for the first four months of this crop year and are the lowest in 14 years. If we look at our competitors' record for the same period, we find that Argentina has increased wheat sales by approximately 60 per cent, Australia by 50 per cent and the U.S.A. by 40 per cent.

The minister stated this evening that our wheat sales will show a substantial increase by the end of the crop year. He suggested they might reach 375 million bushels. Of course, I hope he is right, because naturally all sales will be appreciated by our farmers. But this amount falls far short of our share of world markets when the original IWA was effective. In those years we reached sales peaks of 500 million to 600 million bushels. So, Mr. Speaker, our western farmers cannot really get very excited about a 375-million bushel sales total this year, and we must all agree it will make a pretty small dent in a one billion-bushel wheat carryover presently in our storage bins, to say nothing of what may be added after this year's crop is harvested.

I give the government credit for finally realizing that there is a very serious problem facing western agriculture, but I cannot give it any credit for saying that this program will solve the problem. One could honestly say it is too little and too late. It is still basically only crumbs from the master's table. At first blush the general public, the press and those not too familiar with the western situation would say that \$140 million is a lot of money for one industry. But let me point out, Mr. Speaker, that it has already been fed back to me from western farmers that in all probability about \$40 million may be the maximum that farm-

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ers will be able to utilize under this proposal. This of course remains to be seen. I might mention here that when I say "fed back to me," I had the privilege of attending a meeting in Saskatoon over the weekend where our PC Party was having a leadership convention, and we had delegates, 350 in number, from every corner of Saskatchewan. We had a first-class discussion of the various problems affecting these people, we heard their points of view and I may say that they are not very optimistic.

The biggest and most immediate criticism I hear is that \$6 per acre for summer fallow only pays the cost of cultivation and keeping the weeds down for a year. What does the farmer do about the high land taxes, the interest on his loans against the land, the cash required to keep his wife and family, the interest on machinery payments, etc? The summer fallow payment should have been at least \$10 per acre to be realistic.

In regard to the forage crop plan it also falls flat on its face because of the cost to farmers in loss of a marketable product. In the first place, cultivation costs and the purchase of grass seed will take up the \$10 per acre bonus at once. In fact, it is becoming clear that grass seeds, if they are at all available, will cost 70 cents or 80 cents per pound in some cases. This indicates that here is an area that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Basford) should check into at once.

One of the strongest complaints I hear is based on the fact that due to the high summer fallow voluntary increase last year, some 15 per cent, coupled with the much greater summer fallow hopefully predicted by the government this year under the present plan, if the weather situation turned dry we could conceivably have the worst dust bowl in Canadian history throughout the whole Palliser triangle.

Many hon. members, including the western Liberal member from Assiniboia and my colleague from Battle River, have pointed out quite clearly the many inadequacies of this acreage reduction plan and have implored the government to review the whole program. Therefore, it is not my intention at this late hour to bore hon. members by repeating these complaints. But I would like to place one or two quotations on the record to indicate to government members opposite that all is not well with the plan and that all is not light and happiness with those affected by it.