

Supply—Agriculture

farmers have sown 6 or 7 acres to Selkirk wheat, that the yield can be 20, 30 or 40 bushels an acre, and that if a third of the farmers in a given township have seeded even that small quantity of Selkirk wheat the chances are that including the yield on the Selkirk wheat in the general average would deprive the majority of farmers who have a total crop failure of any payments at all. If, as I say, my interpretation of the order in council is correct, it is a move in the right direction. However, if experience shows that even with this provision hardship is worked on farmers who were not fortunate enough to have any rust-resistant wheat, I would ask the government to take that into consideration and remove rust-resistant wheat entirely from the yield computations so that the vast majority of farmers with no Selkirk wheat will be able to get payments based on their actual yields of wheat not complicated by yields from rust-resistant varieties.

Mr. Harkness: The hon. member for Prince Albert asked the minister how many people were involved, and I think he might answer that.

Mr. Bryce: I do not want to repeat what hon. members in this group have already said. I endorse what they have said. My problem concerns the interlake country that I represent, which has been badly hit with floods, with the result that in 1953 there was practically no crop, and in 1954 no crop at all. People there are in bad shape. In many of these districts no inspection has taken place yet. I have discussed the problem with the minister and he tells me that area comes under the P.F.A.A. But I am getting letters every day from these people saying that the inspector has not been there and that they have been told they do not come within the area.

I suggest to the minister that it would be helpful if a small map of the interlake country could be prepared. The Minister of Agriculture came over here and told me that practically the whole of my constituency was under P.F.A.A. If a map could be prepared on which shaded portions could be drawn to indicate the area that is not covered it would clear the air and help me tremendously in getting some recompense for the people of my district for the tremendous loss they have had.

I do not need to say any more. The hon. member for Moose Mountain and the hon. member for Assiniboia have pretty well said all that needs to be said. If the Minister of Finance will be good enough to try to get the Minister of Agriculture to have a map prepared for me I will appreciate it.

[Mr. Argue.]

Mr. Harris: I will see if I cannot get a map drawn through the kindness of someone in the office of the Minister of Agriculture, and I will draw his attention to all that has been said here. In answer to the hon. member for Prince Albert, I have looked at the estimates of the current year and of next year and I find that full-time members on the staff of P.F.A.A. number 46 for the coming year and 40 for the past year. But I notice that the allowance made for casual employment is just about double. It has increased from \$85,000 to \$155,000. I take it that is casual employment for various persons carrying out part-time duties, although it does not give the numbers of those who would be doing that work. The large proportion of this item is of course for additional administrative costs brought about by the unusual situation that developed in the west last year, and I am quite satisfied that the government hopes to have the extra work done at the earliest possible moment. There is no doubt that conditions developed such as had not been expected or, indeed, had ever been experienced, in some parts of the west in the fall of last year. I would think that in the future wise estimating would still keep the estimates down somewhat from what they will be with this addition. At the same time, I would hope that we could find the money quickly to provide additional labour and additional administrative costs should we enter again into a period such as we had last year. Of course, none of us hope it will be necessary to spend this type of money again in the west.

What the hon. member for Moose Mountain, the hon. member for Assiniboia and the hon. member for Prince Albert have said about the improvement, from their standpoint, that could be made in the act and in the administration of it, I am sure will receive the careful consideration of the Minister of Agriculture.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I might mention, Mr. Chairman, that I received today a letter which indicates the interest that the farmers take in the continuance of the system, and their desire to avoid taking advantage of the public treasury. The suggestion was made that in order to extend the operation of the act there could be no serious objection to increasing the deductions that are made. These deductions are restricted to 1 per cent, and it was thought they could be increased to 2 per cent. This suggestion had been made by a number of farm organizations, their desire being to build ultimately a system whereby they will make their contribution to an insurance fund. To that end the farmers are prepared to ask for an increase