

and sufferings of our early pioneers. They endured privations and faced many dangers in travelling across what was then that great lone land. Their contacts with the roving bands of Indians, then the only inhabitants, were not always happy. Captain Palliser prepared a report, which is now of great value from the historical standpoint. Honourable members will find a copy of it in the Library of Parliament. He reported that an area, roughly triangular in shape, with the present town of Alsask—somewhere near the boundary between Alberta and Saskatchewan—at the apex, and with the base extending from Cardston in Alberta to Deloraine in Manitoba, was unfit for agriculture. This area is known today as the Palliser Triangle, and the years that have followed since he went over that ground have to a great extent justified his forecast.

On July 20, 1856, Palliser was travelling westward from Regina, and in his journal he made the following entry.

Our course was due west, and as far as the eye can see there is nothing but desolate plains.

Then again in 1874 Colonel Walker, one of that historic band of original Northwest Mounted Police, one of those men in scarlet who have done so much to gain the confidence of the Indians and drive out whisky runners and other undesirable characters, when he was travelling through that area said that never had he seen a pasture field so lacking in food as were the prairies around for 150 miles. It is true that a few years later, in 1879 and 1880, a botanist by the name of Macoun travelled through that land and found conditions very much better.

That has been the experience. There are some good years and there are many poor years. For instance, that country was largely settled in the period from 1908 to 1912; 1913 and 1914 were rather dry years; 1915 and 1916 were wet years and there were good crops. Then there was a long series of dry years right up until 1927 or 1928; and again a few good crops. All through the 30's not only were there poor crops, there were poor prices, and of course the people were impoverished. The years 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1942 were good, but the last three years have been worse than any. We hear the same record year after year; the crops are growing and look promising; then the hot winds and dry weather come along and the reports are that the crops are suffering. A little later the indications are that there will be a half a crop; maybe there will be a setback, and finally when harvest time does come the crops have to be ploughed down, or the yield is only two or three bushels per acre. So now after three years of crop

failure, there is an emergency in that district. The time has come when some government action must be taken. It must be government action, because the private capital is not available to correct conditions over that great area.

In talking over this problem, I have met many men who say, "Why not move them all out? Let the land go back to the ranchers; let the land go back to the Indians." But really that is not the answer. In that district churches and schools have been built in the towns and cities; telephone systems have been established; telegraph lines and new railways have gone through; roads have been constructed, and in the towns and cities there is provision for medical care—there are supplies and things of that kind. People who live there find more satisfaction in living there than they could by going to far-off places where none of these facilities are available. Further, the moving out of a large number of people from many districts would bring sadness, suffering and hardship. These people have become attached to the place. Some are making a living—a few are able to make a living—and it would be a very great hardship to move wholesale the people who have settled there.

That is not the answer, because assistance can be given. The Prairie Farm Assistance Act has been a great help. If there is a crop failure year declared, a farmer can get up to \$2.50 an acre for as much as 200 acres, or half of his cultivated acreage up to 200 acres. In an emergency year he can get up to \$2 an acre. This has been the means of preventing hardship in many, many homes. In recent years the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act has been of great benefit. Some 8,000 dugouts, stock-watering reservoirs and small irrigation schemes have been constructed. In places where it is possible to get a run-off they are a great aid to the settlers.

May I mention one place in that very district that Colonel Walker described as a desert, a little area that would feed only one cow without irrigation? That area, with irrigation, has produced as much as 250 tons of feed in one year. The short-grass area contracts and expands with the seasons. There are some areas where power farming can be successfully carried out. The man with the big area and powerful machinery can produce wheat very cheaply. This is the crop which stands the drought best. But the man on the half section leads a short life and a lonely one; he leads a very poor life and before long is impoverished or has to move out.

Now in Australia, according to Mr. Justice Davis, the Canadian High Commissioner, a ten-year plan for the installation of reservoirs