

amount lying fallow for that purpose was about twenty-five per cent. We have increased the percentage of fallow land lying barren every year since we started paying people to grow less acres of wheat. The wheat acreage of western Canada can be increased by nearly four million acres by going back to the percentage of summerfallow that was used prior to the time we started paying people to summer-fallow and not to grow so much wheat. We do not need to reduce the acreage that is being used for feed crops for animals.

Just in that connection let me point out to hon. members one fundamental fact. An acre of land devoted to the production of cereals and producing fifteen bushels of wheat to the acre will provide a million calories, one of the chief measures of nutrition in human food. If that same amount of cereals is fed to hogs, then the calorific value of the bacon and other hog products produced will be reduced to 250,000 calories; and if it is fed to beef cattle the calorific value will be reduced to less than 100,000.

In thickly populated areas famine is not overcome by feeding to live stock cereal grains that can be used to feed people. The cereal crops fed to human beings give more than four times the amount of food value than the live stock products grown from the same amount of cereals would give to them.

I am not suggesting that we should get out of the live stock business. We need it to balance our agriculture. But we have to-day 19,400,000 acres of summerfallow out there growing nothing. The acreage in fallow under pre-war conditions would be about fifteen or sixteen million. By going back to that amount of summerfallow we can get three or four million acres more to grow wheat, which would give us thirty or forty million bushels; and in this way we will do many times more to help correct famine conditions in Britain or somewhere else than will be accomplished by all the effort to save food—though I am not discouraging the government in that policy. Save food by all means. I know that summerfallowing is good farming practice in dry areas, but in time of need it may be better to summer-fallow a little less and grow more wheat to help supply this need.

The Prime Minister's statement on food policy will be a stunning blow to the food producers of Canada. It is a defeatist statement, and it places Canada in an embarrassing position compared with what other nations are doing. The dairy farmers were looking for higher returns to encourage them to increase milk production, which would not necessarily call for a very largely increased use of grain.

The wheat farmers are willing to seed more wheat in the 1946-47 emergency. They are looking for more positive action.

Under present policies, food production in Canada this year will decline. Farm labour is scarce and dear. Farm costs are rising. The price ceilings and subsidies that were sufficient during the past few years are not high enough to-day to call for an expanded food production. This is the simple fact. Why are people going out of these lines of agriculture which require a lot of labour? Because of the very greatly increased cost. If the government is really anxious to help starving Europe it must provide for increased returns to food producers. The dairy farmers must have higher prices to stem the decline in milk production. Wheat farmers need to be allowed to get more of the world price if they are to seed three or four million acres of this land which will otherwise lie fallow this year, if they are to decrease the amount of fallow land from 19.4 million acres to about 16 million acres. All they have to do is, instead of summerfallowing a hundred acres, to summerfallow eighty and use the other twenty for crop.

I trust that the government's new plans will be revised further and that they will encourage greater production of cereals than their objectives conference accepted. I am pleased to note that the government's plans will include a programme for the prevention of waste of food in Canada, and I trust the government will revise its system of subsidies to provide the price incentives needed to bring forth additional production.

That means more labour for Canadian farms. Labour has been tempted away by high wages. A good many farmers feel that they cannot pay those high wages to get them back, and a good many people do not want to go back. It means price incentives which will meet the increased costs of that labour and encourage, while the scarcity of food exists, the greatest production of food that it is possible to achieve in Canada. This does not need to bring about any continuing change in farm practice. Farmers could increase the amount of summerfallow later on, from twenty-five per cent of the total to thirty per cent if there is reason for doing so. They can easily change now from letting thirty per cent lie idle to letting twenty-five per cent lie idle and thus produce more. They did not change from the old practice of letting twenty-five per cent lie idle because they thought it was wise; they changed because they were paid to change. We paid the farmers to sow fewer acres. Naturally they sowed grain on the best prepared land, and so, after paying them to grow less, we actually got more. They sowed