

*Wheat Acreage Reduction*

talize on the situation to some extent and who are possibly not in the greatest of need. I come from the northern part of Saskatchewan, where the problem exists. Many of the farmers there have been cutting down their wheat acres for a number of years, and this year many of my constituents did not grow any wheat. Last year many of these farmers had no wheat acres at all, so this plan means simply nothing to them. Many of the farmers have been forced to sell coarse grain at sacrifice prices for the past few months in order to clothe and feed their families.

I was quite surprised to hear the hon. member for Laval (Mr. Roy), who spoke a while ago, speak in critical terms of western Canada. It surprised me because this is not the way he spoke in western Canada last spring when he was out there with the Committee on Agriculture. He saw the serious situation in which the farmers found themselves and certainly made a different type of speech there than he did tonight. Possibly he has one for western Canada and one for the east. I was quite surprised at this.

How can those who have small wheat acreage afford to summer fallow the land? Where, and how, are they going to buy forage seed, and what will it cost? There is a shortage already, and the cost will be terrific. The maximum they can get is \$6 an acre for what they curtail, and the first payment will not come until July. This is the government that has committed blunders in our wheat sales, in grain movement and boxcar location. Now they say we must fold up because they have failed.

It seems strange that this policy should be put forth only a fortnight after we heard of people who are in dire need and of farmers who have been turned down by the minister. Farmers have offered wheat. They have abundant piles of wheat to be ground into flour. Surely we should be able to assist our neighbours who are in great need. This government has done away with the winter works program, with northern development, with our roads to resources program and with winter access roads. These people have no jobs. When we see the employment situation in Saskatchewan today, we realize fully why these people are in dire need. They have no way of meeting the high cost of living, the highest we have ever experienced.

If we the farmers have to face this kind of situation, surely we should be allowed to pass our abundance of grain along to some of our

[Mr. Cadieu (Meadow Lake).]

more unfortunate neighbours who are living in our midst. What would the pioneers of this great country think if they could see what was going on today? They pioneered this country and they were certainly able to grind their wheat into flour. They did not have to get it done by a cattle-mixer to receive the benefits.

• (12:30 a.m.)

Members of Parliament and members of the civil service were sent to Meadow Lake as a delegation to investigate something they knew little about, but I, the member for that constituency, was not asked to go along with the delegation. Mr. Speaker, I could have shown them something, and it would not necessarily have been concerned with Métis or Indian people. I could have shown them a lot of our other neighbours who are in dire need. I was not asked to go, because Mr. Speaker, I realize it was a just trip—just for Grits. I cannot help but think of what this trip cost and how that money could have been used to grist the wheat that the farmers were willing to give these people. I would like to see the figures of the cost of that trip compared with the cost of grinding the wheat. It is a shame to waste money like that when we have people in dire need and we have piles of good wheat lying on the ground. It is certainly not sensible.

There are some who say that these people were not starving. I know that is quite a serious description. I know that I have friends out there—even among Liberals—and I do not think they would let their neighbours starve; but, my God, how hungry are you going to let them get? When the committee went there some members took pictures of a house to depict the deplorable living conditions, but they never went into the house to see what was in the cupboard. One fellow phoned me to say, "Bert, maybe they claimed they did not find anybody starving, but they sure found out the conditions under which some of these people are living, and so the trip was not in vain after all."

I know the government has to do something about the situation into which it has got itself, but surely it could have made this program more flexible and workable. Now the government plans to pay \$6 an acre next July for summer fallow, and if farmers want to seed their land down to forage they will get \$4 an acre more. But where are the farmers