

Prairie Farm Assistance Act

such an amendment will be brought in. This year, when we are making this amendment, there are 3,689 quarter sections of land affected in the province of Alberta. It might well be that only 1,000 quarter sections would be affected in a similar area in the province of Saskatchewan in another year, and if there were 1,000 or even a smaller number I do not see why they should not receive payment under the act provided they otherwise qualify. I hope the minister will give us some assurance that this is his intention, and that he is not going to wait until there are three of four thousand parcels of land barred from payment under the act before he makes a similar amendment applicable to the province of Saskatchewan. With that assurance we are prepared to allow the bill to go through without moving an amendment, although we had intended to introduce one which would bring similar areas in the province of Saskatchewan in line for payment under the act.

Mr. Gardiner: I thought I gave that assurance when I was speaking, but in case I did not I give it now.

Mr. Robert Fair (Battle River): Mr. Speaker, I have no intention whatever of holding up this legislation. In fact I am wholly in favour of it, and if and when similar circumstances arise in Saskatchewan or Manitoba, or both, then if I am here, and I hope to be, I shall be equally glad to support the claims of the other provinces. At the resolution stage the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) in describing the area affected stated that it was township 60 and all that portion north thereof, but the bill reads, "lands lying north of township 60". When we get into committee I should like the minister to introduce an amendment inserting the words "and including" after the word "of" in the ninth line of the bill. Perhaps the minister has not noticed that but in its present form it excludes township 60 which is not the intention of the minister.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Dion in the chair.

On section 1—*No award.*

Mr. Low: Would the minister care to comment on the point raised by the hon. member for Battle River? I think it was the intention, as we understood his statement at the resolution stage, that the bill would be amended to include township 60 and those lands north. Perhaps the minister would comment on that now.

Mr. Gardiner: Yes, I must admit it was the intention to take in township 60 which would [Mr. Wright.]

make it necessary to have the section read, "lands lying north of the south boundary of township 60".

The Chairman: Shall the clause carry?

Mr. Coldwell: It has to be amended.

Mr. Gardiner: If you will put it through with the amendment—

Mr. Coldwell: You have to move an amendment.

Mr. Fournier (Hull): I move:

That clause 1 of Bill 46 be amended by adding to clause 1 in line 9 after the words "lands lying north of" the words "the south boundary of."

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. Herridge: I am all in favour of this type of legislation. I understand it has been of great benefit to many grain farmers on the prairies, but I should like to ask the minister a question. On what guiding principle does the government base its decision to assist grain growers who lack a crop and ignore the rest of the farmers of Canada who possibly do not have crops? For instance, there are the fruit growers, beet growers, tobacco growers and dairymen. Will the minister explain the guiding principle upon which the legislation is based?

Mr. Gardiner: I did when I introduced it, and got the consent of the house on the condition that I was not to go into that; but in a few words the reason for the legislation as it now exists has to do with the drought that extended over seven years in the prairie provinces.

Mr. Low: On a contributory basis.

Mr. Knight: Would the minister give us roughly the location of the 978 quarter sections in Saskatchewan?

Mr. Gardiner: I would have to go over the whole map. They are spread over the map in small groups.

Mr. Knight: That is the point I wanted to know about.

Mr. Gardiner: They are small groups spread all over the province extending from the United States boundary line northward.

Mr. Herridge: I understand the desire to get the legislation passed at the present time. Could we have the assurance of the minister that he will deal with my question next session during discussion of the agriculture estimates?

Mr. Gardiner: I am quite sure that I shall have to.

Section as amended agreed to.