

two to four years, but in all that long statement there was not one word about the efforts being made by the government to increase food production. The government confines its efforts to increasing the amount of wheat and oats exports immediately available out of the present crop. Surely the government realizes that this is a more serious emergency than that kind of policy will meet. The greatest needs are for this year, and the second greatest needs will be for the year after this.

Commenting upon the dominion-provincial conference objectives the Prime Minister says that no further statement is required in respect to the target for the 1946 wheat acreage. The farm population is urged to plan its farming so as to produce the maximum quantity of food during the next three or four years. There is only one saving grace. Even if the government does not know how to produce more food, the farmers do, and that is by producing more wheat. So we can look for a greater seeding of wheat this year, not because of the government's recommendations but in spite of them, just as the farmers will produce less hogs and dairy products this year in spite of the government's asking, recommending, and hoping for more. Just so long as the government has a so-called objectives conference and puts out pious hopings, recommendations and askings and does not give any other incentives to change, then just so long will the farmers of Canada pay little heed to them.

The government called the agricultural conference of last December an objectives conference. As I said, they put forth recommending, askings, estimates and mostly hopings without any clear guidance in the form of varying price relationships to guide the farmer into the required or hoped for production.

The ridiculous results have been these. The government asked for four per cent more hogs; they will get twenty per cent less. They asked for two per cent more milk; they will get two per cent less. They asked for five per cent more butter; they will get five per cent less. They asked for the same wheat acreage, but the farmers are ignoring them and will soon seed more acreage. Our reports indicate that that is what they are planning to do. Is it any wonder that the farmers do not accept the government's agricultural suggestions? Unless there are some material incentives in the place of mere suggestions and hopes, they will not change their plans to suit the government.

We have had no call from the government until to-day's announcement in the house for a major effort to save food. There has been no call at all for a major effort to produce food. Those are the only two ways in which we can help. I believe that the Canadian

[Mr. Bracken.]

people, if appealed to in a national drive for the conservation of food, will respond generously. I believe if the farmers are given the lead and the necessary incentives in the way of more farm labour and, in some cases, increased price, a considerably larger volume for export can be achieved. The amount that will be obtained from this request to save more food will be considerable, but it will be infinitesimal when compared with the amount that could be obtained by an increased acreage of wheat.

I believe the people of Canada can save enough food and produce that much more to raise materially the standard of nutrition in Britain, or, if it is used elsewhere, to make a material contribution to the lessening of the ill effects of under-nutrition and semi-starvation that exists in some areas. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner), according to press reports, holds the view that the acreage of wheat ought not to be increased in this emergency. As I have said, the Prime Minister has taken the same position on behalf of the government.

I hold a different view. I hold the view that wheat acreage can be increased, and that it can be increased without serious risk to good farming practice and without lessening the normal acreage sown to feed grains. I hold the view not only that wheat acreage can be increased to a considerable degree to help meet this need, but that it ought to be increased for this emergency and that the government ought to come out and say so.

I know that there are lingering fears of the depressing effect of wheat surpluses on wheat prices and wheat deliveries. I know the arguments about the need for cereal grains for feed for live stock. I know the argument that in dry areas a certain proportion of the land should be allowed to lie fallow to conserve moisture for next year's crop. It has been my business for thirty years, both in research and in practice in connection with farming, to understand that. But I know also that the only way to get extra food for hungry people is either to share what we have or to grow more. We have done splendidly in both directions, particularly in the line of production, during the last few years, but we can do more.

I know we need to encourage live stock production. I suggest no diminution in efforts in that direction, but this is not the time to be increasing it or trying to maintain it on the basis of war-time demands. To-day in western Canada nearly one-third, thirty per cent, of the cultivated land devoted to growing cereal crops lies fallow each year, producing nothing. Prior to 1941 the normal