

Wheat Acreage Reduction

year, so in the logical trend of events he only has a 375 bushel quota. Now he has two alternatives: he can summer fallow two years in a row—and we know that this would be one of the disasters of the nation—or he can tear up the 400 acres of grass he has already seeded. So it is actually possible to defeat some of the measures that the proposals are intended to cure.

There are several other situations which have been mentioned briefly. Suppose we run into a situation where a farm is rented from a widow, retired farmer or somebody who needs the income: generally they are on a one-third shared crop basis or something of that nature, and these people need the income from this crop. How will this program fit in with them? They cannot gain anything from the \$6 an acre for summer fallow because they will use at least that much money in completing their summer fallow operations. Certainly, the seeding of grass will not help in any way, shape or form.

● (10:40 p.m.)

Let us look at another example. Suppose you have a farmer who is almost bankrupt—and a good many of them are—and suppose he has been summer fallowing half his land and cropping the other half. We will say he has 1,000 acres. He therefore has 500 acres under crop and 500 under summer fallow. This fellow cannot summer fallow two years in a row, or certainly he should not. So he can quota on 25 per cent of the 500 acres he had under summer fallow last year, that is, he can have quota on 125 acres from last year and he will have 500 acres under summer fallow this year. Altogether he has 625 acres under quota on his 1,000 acre farm. It seems that the government is asking farmers to seed more forage or, in this case, to summer fallow twice.

I think I ought to go into the question of the summerfallowing. I do not think any government should ever encourage farmers to summer fallow, because summer fallowing created one of the greatest disasters that occurred on the North American continent. I was a schoolboy in the mid-thirties; I went to a one-room country school, and I remember you had to have lights on in the middle of the day because the sky was black. Today I can still see fences that were built on top of other fences. You could take a bulldozer and on breaking the ground discover one fence built on top of another.

[Mr. Downey.]

One can see what happened. Our land is one of our greatest natural resources. If the government encourages farmers to summer fallow we can be overtaken by an unmitigated disaster, because that is where the government's program is leading. It would be better to let farmers sow grain and use it either for feed or till it under. Certainly, that would be no more expensive than the summer fallowing process. The government could have inspectors to see that the crop is used in this fashion so that it will not add to the surplus, but I do not think we should encourage farmers to summer fallow.

Much has been made of sowing land for forage. On Saturday, after the minister had made his announcement, I was working out my crop program and thought I had better order some grass seed. Accordingly, I phoned two of the largest seed handlers out west. One was Canwest, the United Grain Growers seed agency. I endeavoured to obtain the two recommended grass varieties, the legume rambler alfalfa and Russian wild rye, the only combination that is really suitable for palatable pasture in drier areas. I found the seed was in extremely short supply. I was able to obtain the legume at \$1 a pound, but Russian wild rye, the other grass seed western farmers use, I could not obtain at any price.

I say to the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, that this matter ought to have been looked into far in advance. Uninitiated people who have not raised livestock think you can go out and buy grass anywhere. They may go to Ontario and buy grass cheaply, but the varieties obtainable here are useless in our western climate and it only misleads people when you encourage them to believe they can use Ontario grasses. If the government had a plan like the one it just announced in mind some time ago, it should have seen to it that suitable grasses were available for seeding.

When you run into an individual who is in poor financial shape you ask, for what will he use this grass? He will be in much too poor a financial condition to buy livestock at current market prices, and he must have some money to live on. True, he will receive \$10 an acre for seeding his land to grass but as we have seen, Mr. Speaker, this farmer of necessity will have half his land out of use for two years in order to collect the \$10. This means that part of his land probably will not be used for two years running. He will have to cultivate the land maybe twice; he will have to spray or he will have to swath weeds if he