

farmers there have been carried through this winter by the assistance of the Dominion Government. I am prepared to pay tribute to the Dominion Government for the assistance which they have given to the settlers in my district. I am not prepared to go the length of saying that this assistance has been administered in the fairest possible manner to the people of that country; but at the same time I think the Government deserve credit for having come to the assistance of the people and for providing means whereby they can exist and remain in the country. If I understand the Minister of the Interior aright, the people of that district are to be provided with seed grain no matter whether they are on unpatented land or on rented land or even on land which has been purchased, because in many cases where land has been purchased, the farmer is in just as bad a position as the man who is on homesteaded land whether patented or unpatented.

There seems to be an impression throughout Eastern Canada that that district is worthless; that it is not worth while paying attention to on account of there being such a severe crop failure. I desire to remove that impression, and to say that during the time I have lived in the southern part of Alberta that district has produced splendid and profitable crops; but, owing to conditions of pioneering in a new country, lack of transportation facilities and difficulties due to commencing farming with very little capital, the prosperity of the people has been impaired, and they were not in a position to finance themselves through a complete crop failure. There are parts of that district, which I consider to be within the drouth-stricken area, where farmers to-day are told that they cannot get seed grain. I have a letter in my possession from Diamond City, a place northwest of the city of Lethbridge, in the drouth-stricken area, a point from which no grain was shipped last fall, and the writer informs me that he was refused a supply of seed grain whereas other farmers surrounding him are receiving seed grain. I intend to hand this letter to the Minister of the Interior, because I think this case should be investigated, and this particular farmer is certainly entitled to seed grain. Any farmer in the constituency of Medicine Hat who asks for seed grain, unless he has accumulated some wealth, is entitled to seed grain, because the entire district is within the drouth-stricken area,

The inability of many farmers to receive seed grain this year is due to some of the

banks of this country. I want to be candid in saying that some of the banks in this country, since the war commenced and since this depression came upon us, have been of no assistance whatever to farmers who have securities which they could offer to these banks. In that way many men who anticipated that they could secure seed grain through their own resources, have been unable to do so on account of the fact that they could not get any advances whatever from the banks. I have been told this by men who have assured me that they could offer gilt-edged security. If I remember aright, the hon. member for Calgary (Mr. Bennett) made a similar statement in that city. It is on account of this fact that the demand is now coming in to the Government for advances of seed grain from people who, I believe, ordinarily would not seek advances, because out of their own resources they cannot secure assistance which they could have secured in other years. It is the duty of the Government under such circumstances to look after those people, no matter whether they are in the drouth-stricken area or not. In my own district I am satisfied that there is at least a ten per cent increase in the land under cultivation for crops next year. That is in a district which did not have any crops last year, where the people were absolutely discouraged and down-hearted; but at the same time they have cultivated more land than they had last year and are prepared to raise a crop this year, and, from the conditions that exist in southern Alberta, I believe we have never had better prospects for a crop than we have at the present time. If we get a crop, with the prevailing prices, all the obligations the farmers have undertaken with the Government of the Dominion of Canada will be met, provided that the machinery companies, the banks and others do not get after the farmers first and take everything.

Now, I desire to add one observation with regard to this area which I represent and within which I reside. I would like to mention the question of feed for stock. My hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Sir George Foster) has been an advocate of mixed farming in western Canada. Others have given those farmers the same advice. The farmers have followed that advice to a very large extent, and in my district there has been a large increase in live stock during recent years. But on account of the drouth there has been no feed whatever for that stock. In October last I communicated with the Commissioner