

Canagrex

Wally Vanin, district ag rep at Kamsack, expects that area farmers will leave about a third of their land in summer-fallow this year.

Because of low prices and increases in input costs, farmers are certainly intending to leave more land fallow, Vanin said, adding that a five-year average shows that 15 per cent of area farmland is left for summer-fallow as compared to this year when between 25 and 35 per cent of the total acres will be left unseeded.

Mr. Holtmann: What should they do about it?

Mr. Nystrom: I hear the Hon. Member's question. First, just so that some of our big city Tory friends understand, about 15 per cent of the farmland is left for summer fallow on average in the Norquay area. This year, about a third of the farmland will be left for summer fallow. The article continues:

With increased amounts of summer-fallow, there is much more need for soil conservation practices, he said, urging farmers to obtain more information on the topic during Soil Conservation Week (April 13 to 17).

The number of acres farmers plan to sow with peas is "growing every day", he said,—

That partly answers the Hon. Member's question. It continues:

—explaining that the market for the peas expanded after most European countries stopped buying corn gluten pellets for feed from the U.S.A.

Although peas still represent less than 10 per cent of area crops, between 6,000 and 8,000 acres of peas will be seeded.

Everyone seems to be planning to sow some barley, especially two-row varieties, he said. Canola acreage is stable and wheat will be down.

We can see what is happening in Norquay. First, farmers are leaving about a third of their acreage to summer fallow. Second, they are sowing alternative crops like peas and others. Because of the decision to sow other crops in that part of Saskatchewan, they need Canagrex now more than ever to get out there and sell, to hustle, and to find markets in various parts of the world.

Mr. Holtmann: What does Canagrex do?

Mr. Nystrom: No wonder the Hon. Member was kicked in the shin by one of his constituents. He wants to abolish Canagrex. He wants to get rid of an agency which may find a market for the commodity of a poor farmer in Norquay, Saskatchewan, so that he can feed his wife and children.

No wonder people in my constituency are saying, as they did in the 1930s, that Tory times are tough times. The old-timers in Norquay tell me that in the 1930s, when R. B. Bennett was Prime Minister of the country, people had to take the engines out of their cars and convert them into buggies which they called Bennett wagons.

Prices for farmers are as low now as they were in the 1930s. Once again history is repeating itself. People know that Tory times are tough times. People know that the Conservative Party is more interested in its wealthy millionaire friends in central Canada than in ordinary farmers in Norquay or Kamsack. They know that because they have seen farm prices drop, drop, drop. They have seen farm input costs going up, up, up. They also see a Government which is to abolish Canagrex, an agency which tries to sell farm products to

ensure that the ordinary guy in Norquay is better off. I will not stand for that. The people of Canada will not stand for that. What we want in this country is an election, and we want that election now so Canadians can have a Government that represents average Canadians, ordinary Canadians, and stands for fairness, not just for some wealthy banker in the City of Toronto, but for the farmer in Norquay, the farmer in Selkirk and the ordinary person from one end of this country to the other. I appeal to my friends on the back benches of the Conservative Party to have the courage and convictions of the Hon. Member for Edmonton—Strathcona and to stand up and put the Prime Minister of Canada in his place. He would not know the front end of a cow from the back end of one even if he ran into one. That is one of our problems and why there is almost a rebellion in the back benches of the Conservative Party.

● (1620)

I call upon Members of the Conservative Party to rise and show us that they have the courage and the convictions of the Member from Edmonton—Strathcona who is one of the highest respected Members of the Conservative Party in western Canada, who had the courage to say no to the Prime Minister of Canada, who had the courage to say that the west is being shafted, who had the courage to say that there are too many scandals and too much patronage in the Government of Canada, and who had the courage to stand up and say, "We need a fair deal". Why don't the other trained seals do the same thing? If they do, we will save Canagrex and we will have a Bill that will help the ordinary farmer in Norquay, the farmer in Kamsack, the farmer in Assiniboia, and we will be a much better and stronger country for it.

Mr. Henderson: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) for his speech in the dying stages of Canagrex. In one part of his speech he said that we need now more than ever an entity such as Canagrex. I agree with the Hon. Member's statement. Canada is and could be the food basket of the world. We have no problem producing agricultural goods, especially wheat, potatoes, grains of all sorts, beef, pork, whatever. We have an excellent country and we have some of the best and the most efficient farmers in the world. But one of our big problems is that we cannot sell our farm products. I look at my own province, which is noted for potatoes. I have mentioned it before in the House that the potato prices this year are not that bad. They are at a break even point, and even to the point where a small profit is shown. But I want to wave the flag at the Government and through you, Mr. Speaker, at other Members of Parliament. Only one year out of every two or three do we find ourselves in a break even or profitable situation mainly because of increased production or a larger crop per acre in other countries. If there is a crop failure in Holland, in some other European country or in the United States, then those who produce potatoes in Canada certainly can derive a good income from a failure somewhere else.