

*Supplementary Estimates*

small group of men who control a great amount of resources. In this case, however, we are dealing with a numerically large group of farmers which makes it very difficult to ensure the achievement of the desired result from this program. The regulations will be promulgated in due course, so we are told, and the farmers will have to live with those regulations, whatever they are. But so will the businessmen have to live with them, Mr. Speaker, and the businessmen are serving those farmers. The downturn which will occur in the economy, as a result of the restricted spending in that prairie region, and in Saskatchewan in particular, cannot even be calculated. Already we find a serious slump in that prairie region, and in particular in the centre of that region where this program is expected to have its major effect. This is the thing that has been overlooked in connection with the program.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Agriculture is the strongest economic base in the three prairie provinces. Instead of reducing income from agriculture, we should be reinforcing it. We should be making sure that it is strong, positive and moving forward. This proposal is essentially a negative one, and the farmer and the businessman do not know what it may hold in the future. The man who may take a large amount of his land out of production and put it into summerfallow this year has no idea what he is going to do with it next year. Last week I attended ten meetings in Saskatchewan and talked to upwards of 900 or 1,000 farmers. More than that, Mr. Speaker, I listened to them. At each of those meetings the question was always asked, "All right for this year, but what do we do next year? What do we do when we have substantial amounts of land placed in summerfallow that will be ready for cropping in the succeeding year? Is it all going to be cropped? Is it going to produce more surplus wheat?"

Is the government already laying its plans for the future and not telling anybody? Does it have a nice little clutch of planners who are already making plans to keep this land out of production next year also? Is this what is taking place? In all conscience, to make economic or moral sense, the people of that region have a right to know where they are heading. Above all else the farmer is a planner. He has to be a planner. What farmers do next year is planned with what they are going to do the year after that in mind. If you are going to put in forage, then obviously you

[Mr. Gleave.]

will have a cow herd to use that forage, or there has to be a market some place where you think you can sell that forage. Otherwise, you are going to plan things that way.

If certain amounts of land are going into forage, does the government have a plan for an increased cattle population? If certain land is going into summerfallow this year what is to be done with it next year? If the government devised a program to cover three or five years then, it might have had some justification for putting a program like this before the country. But it has not done so. Its program covers just one year. In our mythology we say that Saskatchewan is a next year country. Above all, the minister should know this. Admittedly he is not a farmer himself, but you do not have to be a farmer to acquire the wisdom to know what happens. Surely, he ought to know that this is a next year country.

I give you the example of a man who came to me and asked what he could do. He said, "I am operating 2,000 acres and I have 200 cattle." That is a fair sized operation. He said, "This program will divest me of my right to market wheat. If I lose my right to market wheat because I cannot fit into this program, then my gross income is cut by so much. What I have got to do in the next two or three months is figure out how to put another enterprise on my farm." He was talking about a hog enterprise. Whether he will undertake that or not I do not know. He said, "I have got to put some further enterprise on the farm to take care of the quota I am going to lose under this program."

Consider the individual who in the last two or three years attempted to adjust to the market circumstances which he knew existed and the changes which he thought were coming. He reduced his wheat acreage and sought to adjust. Where does he find himself under this program? He finds himself severely penalized, and unable to adjust his operations to fit the governments program. In its broad sweep this program is to be applied from the banks of the Red River in Winnipeg to the Peace River at Fort St. John, which takes in an area of a couple of thousand miles. This program takes within its scope farmers all the way from those in southern Manitoba, many of whom practice continuous cropping, intensive cultivation and who have discarded the summerfallow idea altogether, to farmers across the great plain in the drier region where you have a half or third crop practice. It also takes in the rancher, the one who may be a complete rancher, whose total