

'That this representative meeting of municipal officers strongly urge on the Dominion Government to supply seed grain to all farmers, in need of same, for seeding season of 1915.

That letter has to do with a large territory. There are, I think, ten municipalities mentioned, which would cover an acreage of about 2,073,600 acres of land. Each municipality in the province of Saskatchewan consists of nine townships so that there are ninety townships represented by that letter, and the need apparently is great in that locality. I find also that only yesterday or the day before a delegation of three or four members of the Regina Board of Trade waited upon the Dominion Government with a view to urging upon it the necessity of taking some immediate action on this question. Seed time will be upon us in a few weeks; the people are anxious as to what will be done; some farmers are without seed grain at the present time, and immediate action is necessary to relieve the doubt that exists and to give the farmers in that section seed grain in order that they may properly produce and harvest a crop in 1915.

I am informed—I do not know whether it is correct or not—that the Department of the Interior has on record over 6,000 applications for seed grain from the province of Saskatchewan outside of this drouth-stricken area altogether. That number does not include applications for seed grain from the province of Alberta and Manitoba; and if my information is correct, the number is very much in excess of 6,000.

The worst feature of the situation as it exists in the province of Saskatchewan to-day is that the farmers from north to south and from east to west outside the drought-stricken area have been deceived with regard to the attitude of the Dominion Government in respect to this matter of supplying seed grain. It may be an open question whether that is the case or not; but I have only to say that since the month of October the people in the district in which I reside, and I believe the people throughout the length and breadth of the province of Saskatchewan, believed that the Government were going to supply grain to farmers on patented and unpatented lands without the drouth-stricken area. That belief was strengthened by official information sent out by men high in the employ of the Dominion Government. I have here a copy of a letter which, in the month of October, 1914, was sent broadcast throughout the province of Saskatchewan from the

[Mr. W. M. Martin.]

office of the Commissioner of Immigration of the city of Winnipeg. In this particular letter no exception is made whether a farmer resides in the drouth-stricken area or not, or whether on patented or unpatented land. The letter is as follows:

In answer to your letter of recent date, asking for an advance of seed grain, I have to inform you that this department is making arrangements to supply bona fide settlers, who have lost their crop this year and are unable to obtain seed, with good clean seed next spring, delivery to start about the middle of February. This seed will be furnished at cost, cleaned and sacked, and thoroughly inspected by inspectors of the Department of Agriculture, and security therefor taken by a lien on the unpatented land of the settler.

Here is the important part of it:

In the case of the settler having only patented land, a note must be given for the amount so advanced.

Therefore the Government during the months of October, November and December of last year was satisfied with the notes of farmers who had patented land. The Government were particularly generous at that time.

Lien or notes will be repayable on or about January 1, 1916, with interest at five per cent per annum.

The farmer during those months thought he was getting a square deal from the Dominion Government.

When making application give correct description of your land, state whether it is unpatented, homestead, pre-emption, purchased homestead or script. Should you have only patented land, say so and give exact location of same, state also how much encumbrance against the land, if any. Wheat, oats and barley are the only grains which will be distributed and in sufficient quantities to sow land you have under cultivation and ready for seed.

No limitation put upon the quantity.

I am enclosing you herewith an application form, which, if you will carefully fill out and return to me, will have due consideration.

What I wish the House to note is that the Government in that letter of October, 1914, says that it will supply seed grain for the year 1915 without any limitation whatever. It also states that in cases of patented lands where the Dominion Government would not have control of the title could not exercise the right of lien as provided for by the Dominion Lands Act, an ordinary note would be taken with interest at five per cent per annum, such note payable January 1, 1916.

The last point in the letter is that all that any settler, whether on patented or unpat-