

a very small part—I would say not more than twenty per cent at the outside—of what had been put up in 1938 was still there in 1945. I would expect that, in view of the nature of the season last year, probably all that storage was disposed of last year.

In addition to that, we had promoted the production of alfalfa both at Valmarie and at Eastend. The hope was that farmers there would take 40-acre or 80-acre plots under irrigation, grow fodder and store it for the purpose of maintaining live stock throughout any drought year which might come along. Unfortunately, when drought did strike them two years ago, we found that the intention which we had in mind in the beginning was not being carried out. Perhaps that was owing to the fact that we had not kept a close enough check on the matter ourselves. When I was driving down to inspect what was going on at Valmarie two years ago I met truckloads of alfalfa coming in to plants in Swift Current, at which point, or at other points to which it would be shipped from there, it was to be distributed to different parts of Canada in the form of alfalfa meal, which could be used for the feeding of live stock in different places.

Of course that was not our intention when, at a cost of \$120,000, we put in a dam and made provision for irrigation and the seeding down of land to alfalfa in the centre of the drought area. Our intention was that that fodder would be retained in that district, at least until some intimation had been given that it was not going to be needed there.

This year we did enter into an arrangement with the government of Saskatchewan. I am not certain that the forms are completely signed up; nevertheless an agreement has been reached. Before stating what the arrangement is, I should point out that there is a development under which we drain Rush lake, and seed down part of it. That has been available for the purpose of providing feed. I was going to say that in connection with the Swift Current storage project, or the Swift Current irrigation project which, as hon. members from Saskatchewan will know, extends from west of Swift Current over to Rush lake and the district surrounding it, we have this year entered into an arrangement with the provincial government under which they have the first claim upon the feed that may be produced on this land for the purpose of providing forage for live stock. If they do not require it, then, of course, the federal government has the right to dispose of it in different ways, in order to make provision for

[Mr. Gardiner.]

securing the feed position. There is complete cooperation between the two governments in connection with that activity.

I may say that is a plan which has been worked out as a result of experience over the years and which, it is hoped, we shall be able to apply in any areas where irrigation is being carried on with the support of moneys provided by the federal government.

Mr. WRIGHT: The minister has stated that when they began the production of alfalfa it was the intention that it should be used in the area in which it was produced. He stated also, however, that a year ago he found that quantities of it were being shipped out. When that was the intention, did the government make any provision for purchasing and storing it? Otherwise it was only natural that the farmers who produced it would sell it. Until the dominion or the provinces made some provision for the purchase and storing of it, it seems to me it would continue to be shipped, because the people producing it will need the cash, and naturally they will sell it.

Mr. GARDINER: As I said earlier, I think some of the blame for what happened can be placed on the administration of the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act in connection with that project. But, as I said later, there has been developed a plan under which the provincial government has the right to purchase the feed and make use of it, first; and after they have exercised their right the federal government still has the right to make use of the feed in order to assist people in those areas.

Mr. McLURE: Under these items for production service I am wondering if I might ask whether the special freight rates on coarse grains from the west to the maritime provinces will be continued for the benefit of farmers in the production of live stock?

Mr. GARDINER: The question does not really come under this item, but rather under the special votes. However I do not know that there is any real objection to discussing it now. It does come under the heading of production. But the expenditure itself, in connection with the paying of freight rates and assistance to farmers through the payment of subsidies does not really come under this vote, and part of it is under trade and commerce.

Mr. McLURE: Is there any assurance that it will be continued?

Mr. GARDINER: We have already announced that the freight on feed grains will be paid until July 31, 1948. That was