

Prairie Farm Assistance Act

2. What amount of money has been or will be paid out, 1939 to the end of the 1949 crop year, to producers by provinces under the act?

3. How many townships or part townships in each province have qualified for payments under the act during 1949?

4. How many of the same townships, by provinces, have qualified under the act since and including 1939 (a) 2 years; (b) 3 years; (c) 4 years; (d) 5 years; (e) 6 years; (f) 7 years; (g) 8 years; (h) 9 years; (i) 10 years?

Answer of Department of Trade and Commerce:

1. (a) Manitoba	\$ 7,282,403.06
(b) Saskatchewan	24,607,978.74
(c) Alberta	13,109,306.60
Unallocated as at December 31, 1949	9,198.91

Answer of Department of Agriculture:

1. Answered by the Department of Trade and Commerce.

2. Manitoba	\$ 2,547,590.77
Saskatchewan	94,884,155.58
Alberta	26,444,884.05
	\$123,876,630.40

3. Manitoba, 82; Saskatchewan, 1,731; Alberta, 1,126.

4. Manitoba (a) 23; (b) 9; (c) 8; (d) 5; (e) nil; (f) nil; (g) 1; (h) nil; (i) nil.

Saskatchewan (a) 42; (b) 114; (c) 136; (d) 193; (e) 294; (f) 329; (g) 294; (h) 162; (i) 44.

Alberta (a) 152; (b) 109; (c) 64; (d) 58; (e) 71; (f) 71; (g) 121; (h) 177; (i) 41.

I believe that is useful information which has a bearing on the matter before the committee.

At the last session of parliament many resolutions were sent to me as a result of the aphid infestation. Owing to extremely wet weather, seeding in some areas was delayed until late in the year, and the aphid infestation affected some of those crops. In many instances the crops were completely destroyed. However, a number of townships had a fair average yield, with the result that certain people located within these townships at different points in southwestern Manitoba could not qualify for assistance under the act.

As a result of this grievance I received resolutions from several municipal councils in my riding, in which they asked that, where they were trying to diversify their farming methods and to get into the production of livestock, the acreage or yield of oats or barley should be used to a greater extent as a basis for qualification, replacing wheat acreage. I understand that under the regulations that can now be done—and probably it could have been done then. Anyway that provision now appears in the regulations, and I suggest this point should be made clear and publicized. In an area where oats or barley are grown to a greater degree than wheat, it should be permissible to use oats or barley as the basis for qualification. Last

fall I had many resolutions from municipal councils asking for that. I want to make that point clear.

I am sorry that the administration did not see their way clear to bring it down nearer to an individual basis, because there are many cases of hardship. I am bound to agree that I can see difficulties in administration if it were brought down to an individual basis; nevertheless a lot of hardship has been caused throughout the years because that cannot be done. Many people scattered right across my constituency had practically a total crop failure last year and cannot qualify under the act for any assistance. I am sure the minister will agree that because of diversification in those areas, the raising of more stock, when they desire in a particular year to produce more oats or barley than wheat they should be allowed to qualify on that basis in the event of a crop failure.

Mr. Gardiner: In view of the discussion that I understand is to follow, there are only one or two words I should like to say now with regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Souris about submarginal lands.

There has been considerable discussion in the press of the west, and I presume it arises as the result of a loose use of terms in the debate in the house. Reference has been made to abandoned lands, as though the legislation were intended to make it impossible for abandoned lands to be brought back under cultivation. This legislation has nothing to do with abandoned lands. They do not come under it at all, and never have. From some of the discussions that have been taking place I am afraid that some abandoned lands have crept under it. It is partly for the purpose of rechecking that and making sure that abandoned lands are not under the act that we are anxious to have the amendment. They never were and never were intended to be under the act. Abandoned lands were not supposed to come under the act at all, even if they were later cultivated; therefore the amending bill has nothing to do with abandoned lands. They are barred by the act as it was originally drafted, and by the regulations.

Then there is the suggestion that we are trying to bar all submarginal lands. Some people would say that if you barred all submarginal land you would bar all lands that are under the act if you gave a proper definition to submarginal lands. The bill does not bar submarginal lands as such, and has no effect upon them. At present the act provides that people on land that does not yield a reasonable crop are paid assistance during the time they remain on the land. We are