

Wheat Acreage Reduction

permit-book holder an analysis and explanation of the program to assist him in the job of calculating his best position and, therefore, the right result for him.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The government will be also sending out an army of inspectors.

Mr. Lang: It is clear—and hon. members from other parts of the country appreciate this—that it is not a soft or an easy program. May I also say that those hon. members appreciate it is a good program. It is designed to face, in a hard-headed fashion—

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In a thick-headed fashion.

Mr. Lang: —the real problem that faces us as we come into the 1970 crop year. It is designed to solve this problem to the advantage of the agricultural producer and, in particular, the agricultural producers of the region taken together. Again, I earnestly ask hon. members on all sides of the House to give the program their best support in order that the maximum amount of help may be given to the agricultural community.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The minister's time has expired. If the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek (Mr. McIntosh) is to ask his question, it must be with the consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, if the minister is so anxious for our co-operation, why does he refuse to answer our questions?

Mr. Lang: I shall be delighted to answer.

Mr. McIntosh: I thought someone on the government side refused unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. McIntosh: So that we may understand exactly what the minister is talking about, will he comment on two examples I shall cite. Let us take the example of one farmer who has all his land in summer fallow and the example of another farmer who has all his land in crop: how will this program apply to both those farmers?

Mr. Lang: In examining the program, the hon. member will see that a number of items

are included in it to deal with the particular situations of those who in fact moved much of their land into summer fallow or minimum maintenance last year. I refer to features such as deeming that anything over 50 per cent be treated as though it were wheat land. Also, the quota for 1970 is based on the total summer fallow acreage of 1970, plus one-quarter of the acres under summer fallow in the previous year.

It is true, of course, that a program of this sort cannot evenly affect every farmer in such a diversified region. It was our objective to help all farmers as well as we could, and one of the very significant ways in which a farmer without a surplus will be better off results from his opportunity to grow non-wheat crops. He will be protected through this measure from too serious a move of acres into these crops. Had it not been for them, the burden of surplus in such crops as rape-seed would have been very frightening indeed.

• (9:30 p.m.)

Mr. McIntosh: Mr. Speaker, will the minister now answer my question?

Mr. George Muir (Lisgar): Mr. Speaker, for over a year western opposition members have been trying to persuade the government to give some form of assistance to western agriculture to relieve the serious cash position of the farmers due to their inability to market their grain through the Wheat Board. Last Friday the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Lang) announced that something would be done in this regard. His announcement is apparently supposed to hold the surplus at its present level and at the same time provide the western agriculturist with his living expenses for this crop year. The minister may be a good professor, but he is an awfully poor mathematician. The cash advance will take up at least half the quota that the farmer is going to receive between now and the end of the crop year. The \$6 requirement for summer fallow will not pay the cost of summer fallowing. That leaves exactly nothing for the farmer to live on.

The minister says the farmers are prepared to face reality. He said he talked to farmers in Saskatchewan. The only reason they are facing reality is they know this is all the government is going to offer them. There is no point in not facing reality because that is it as far as the government is prepared to go.

The minister went into quite a bit of detail in his announcement dealing with the acreage