

the case if the government did for the wheat growers of the west what they are doing for most of the other people of Canada.

That gives some idea of the sacrifices which the wheat farmer is being asked to make under the policy of the government of the day. And I say that this reduction in his income is entirely too much to ask the farmer to take, particularly in view of the conditions which have prevailed in western Canada during the last ten years. It has been hard enough for the western farmer to get along on 70-cent wheat, let alone placing him in a position where deliberately he must make a sacrifice of between \$85,000,000 and \$100,000,000 in his income. From what I have seen in the press; from communications I have received from the prairie provinces, so far as my constituency and the great farm organizations and the wheat farmers of those provinces are concerned, the government's wheat policy is totally inadequate. We believe that the provisions of the bonus scheme and of the regulations that have been made in connection with it are most unsatisfactory and impractical having regard to the cultural practices which the farmers of the west would ordinarily follow during the present year. Bitter complaints have come to the government from all over Canada. The wheat pool is protesting. The Saskatchewan and Alberta governments are protesting, and so, I believe, is the Manitoba government. The federation of agriculture is protesting. I understand, too, that the former minister of agriculture in this government, Hon. W. R. Motherwell, has written to the Secretary of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan section) at Saskatoon suggesting that there should be a march on Ottawa by the wheat farmers of western Canada.

I am convinced, Mr. Chairman, so far as the general wheat policy of the government is concerned, that the acreage reduction and bonus scheme is far too drastic to be carried out in one year. Under the policy proposed by the Minister of Agriculture the wheat acreage will be reduced by 9,000,000 acres, which is approximately one-third of the total that was in production last year. If a reduction in acreage is required, and I am not by any means suggesting that it is not, it seems to me that this is far too drastic a reduction to bring about in the course of one year, because I believe it will completely disrupt and disorganize well-established farming practices. It would appear to me that the bonus scheme operating in connection with it will be open to the gravest of abuses, and that in any event it will give rise to inequities and injustices as between individual farmers. It will favour the large farmer as against the

[Mr. Bence.]

small. It will pay a premium to the poor farmer and discriminate against the good farmer. It will pay a premium to the man who has been mining his farm year after year, putting everything he possibly can into wheat, whereas the farmer who has been following proper cultural practices by putting in wheat, coarse grains, and summer-fallowing will not be able to take advantage of the government's proposals as the wheat miner will be able to do.

I suggest that a far better plan is the one which has been suggested to the government and to this committee, namely to advance materially the initial payment, to remove completely the bonus scheme and the regulations under it, and to permit the farmer to build up a certain reserve on his farm as a buffer or, if you like, a type of crop insurance against the day of scarcity which is as bound to return as the days of plenty are here to-day. The farmer realizes that he cannot sell all the wheat which is being produced on the present acreage. Tell him—I think it is quite fair to do so—that you can take only a certain amount of the wheat which he will grow, but allow him to work out his own salvation so far as the cultural practices of his farm are concerned. Because each farmer farms a little differently from the other farmer, but under this plan he is pretty well bound in advance to a definite proposition or he cannot take advantage of the bonus scheme.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): He is regimented.

Mr. BENCE: He is regimented, yes. Good farmers know exactly the manner in which they want to till their land in order to obtain the best out of it. It seems to me they should be given scope and permission to do this, subject of course to the proviso that they can sell only so much wheat out of this crop.

The policy suggested by the federation of agriculture appealed to me very strongly. Their proposal, that the farmer should be permitted to build up a reserve on his farm as a type of crop insurance, seems to me sound and sensible and well worthy of adoption.

The Minister of Agriculture stated in this chamber, as I recollect, that the government was considering the matter of assisting the farmer in building storage facilities on his farm. But he stated also at another time that nothing could be done about this until next July. Well, the farmer is putting his wheat in now. He has to know now what plans to make with respect to taking care of his wheat when he harvests it. I realize, of course, that the Minister of Agriculture would feel happier if he had some definite idea of what the crop yield will be, but the farmer has to