

some women standing all day and all night in front of the land titles office, waiting for an opportunity to file on homesteads. Those people made their homes in the area, but successive crop failures caused about 60 per cent of them to move out, and the 40 per cent who remained have endured long periods of hard times.

Conditions this year are typical. If you drive through the country or fly over it this year you will see large fields of grain, fields of three hundred and four hundred acres, being plowed down because the crop is not worth cutting. Other fields are being cut for feed, and some of these will yield from two to five bushels an acre. In that district 2,700 townships will be eligible for prairie farm assistance payments. That means that there are 2,700 townships where the yield will be less than eight bushels per acre. It also means that about 70,000 farmers will lose their crops and will receive the "dry bonus". Most of them will need it badly, and they all are very grateful to the Minister of Agriculture and to the members of parliament who voted for the bonus. According to the estimate of the departmental superintendent, \$17 million will be paid out this year for that purpose. About two-thirds of that sum will come from the dominion treasury, the remaining third being from the 1 per cent levy on all grain sold by farmers during the last few years.

Irrigation is not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne, but I make an earnest appeal to the members of this parliament to support the Minister of Agriculture in his effort to speed up and expand the irrigation program. The minister has lived in that country and has seen conditions there, but he may have difficulty in persuading some honourable members to realize the very great need for irrigation. The farmers themselves are certainly convinced that it is needed. Indeed, the dream of the farmers there for nearly half a century has been a beneficial use of the waters that flow down the eastern slope of the rockies, pass through the prairies and on to Hudson Bay.

The cities and towns out there also are desperately in need of this development. During the last few years many new houses have been built, and there has been an increase in the urban population. The Dominion Government will not get back the money that it has advanced for wartime housing there unless the land is irrigated, because, unless this development is proceeded with, a good deal of unemployment is likely. On the other hand, if the land is irrigated, a number of new industries would probably be established, such as beet sugar factories, canneries and quick-freezing plants, all of which would be needed to handle the crops.

About half a million acres in southern Alberta are at present irrigated by the larger projects, and under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act water storage facilities have been provided in eight to ten thousand small projects, which serve another quarter-million acres, so that in all there are about three-quarters of a million acres under irrigation. But engineers who have studied the problem are convinced that another million acres could be irrigated without exhausting the water supply, and some projects have been started to accomplish this end. For instance, there is the St. Mary-Milk River dam, which was started in 1946 and the key structure, the Great Spring Coulee dam and reservoir, which will be completed probably next year. When the whole project has been finished, it will irrigate about 345,000 acres of the driest land in southern Alberta and will supplement the water supply of 120,000 acres.

There is in Alberta another venture in which progress has been discouragingly slow. About 35 years ago a patriotic British investor put \$13 million into the Bow River scheme. It was the first undertaking in that line, yet it has not been extended. For the low cost of about \$20 per acre it could be developed, and some 192,000 acres could be irrigated for approximately four or five million dollars. Year after year negotiations have been carried on between the Dominion Government, the provincial authorities and the private land company, but to the great disappointment of the people concerned, no agreement has been reached. At the present time, however, there is before the Dominion Government a proposal to buy out the land company for \$2,250,000. The people in that area are most anxious to see the agreement consummated, but the long and wearisome delays have shaken their faith in the democratic method of doing business.

In the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan approximately a million acres could be irrigated, and some plans have been made for doing this. Such a development would cost about \$31 million, and if power were developed, another \$10 million would be expended.

The land about which I speak has an annual rainfall of about ten inches. If it had as much as fifteen inches during the growing season, good crops could be produced. But that very seldom happens. Only about 1/30 of the dry land can be irrigated, but that small portion would produce as much as the entire area produces at the present time.

Canada is in need of an increase in her food production. In the first place, the people need more food. Only about 40 per cent of Canadians get the quantity and quality of