

Prairie Farm Assistance Act

The hon. member for Prince Albert mentioned a desire to raise our production figures by 1990 to 36 million tonnes. I recently met heads of research departments at Saskatoon, and we discussed that. Some of them are very optimistic, as I am, that we can do that. One said we should not do that and that we should not wear out the soil because of the fact that people in other parts of the world are doing nothing about controlling their populations. The area in Canada I come from has probably some of the oldest farm land in Canada. I can show hon. members land there which is well taken care of and has been for many, many years. I am told that one farm was first cultivated in 1730, and it is one of the most productive in the whole area. It produces a variety of crops. Only the imagination could limit the productivity of that land. In my view there is no more important aspect to future farm stability and prosperity—and I am repeating this—than the increased production potential afforded through research. Some of my economists can show that for every dollar invested in research we get back nine. That is a pretty good investment.

Agriculture Canada has set a priority on production research in the western provinces. Already about 1,350 person-years in the department are allocated to the western region of the research branch, and more than \$40 million is being spent annually by my department on western research. Some say that is not enough in view of the amount of production which comes out of that area, but let us look at our accomplishments in research in cereal grain and in canola seed. They have been phenomenal with respect to production in that area. We are doing the kinds of things which are needed to promote that kind of production, but I do not say we should cut back.

I come back to what the hon. member for Prince Albert said. This year we are adding 59 man-years to research in Canada. We can always say we are not adding enough, that we are short of bodies and so forth. Any good researcher always wants more. If he did not, he would not be a good researcher. The kinds of activities I have talked about have paid off in the past. Just as an example, almost three-quarters of the total wheat acreage planted on the prairies last year was sown with five hard red spring wheat varieties developed at Agriculture Canada's Winnipeg research station. That accomplishment is the envy of the world.

I am reading a book written by Grant MacEwan with respect to how agriculture in western Canada was developed. In the early days people were more interested in fur-bearing animals and that type of thing, but they said that the land would never be productive. They said it should never be cultivated. Palliser and the man who was head of Rupertsland gave evidence to the British, before the British sold that part of the land to Canada, saying that the land would never be productive. How wrong they were! We have become the envy of the world, but that is mainly because of the research which has been carried on. That is why the Chinese want researchers from western Canada who know how to farm in semi-desert and dry land conditions. These western Canadian researchers know the varieties of grass which will withstand the tremen-

dously hard winters in that part of the world. We have some of the world's leading expertise in that type of research.

The government's research program to develop double-low canola varieties of rapeseed allowed that industry to grow—we call that the Cinderella story—from almost nothing to a billion dollar industry in just a little over 20 years. The expansion in that industry again can only be limited by the imagination. I learned the other day that by 1990 producers will be growing two million acres of rape in the far northern portion of Ontario, the clay belt, in other regions in the east, and also in parts of Quebec. It will be grown because new varieties will be productive and even better with regard to protein content and with regard to the oil, which we know is good for human or animal consumption, or for whatever we might want to use it. This is due to the research carried out by people in western Canada.

Research in canola seed in Canada in 30 years has superseded anything Japan has done in 300 years and anything Poland has done in 1,000 years. Those are the two oldest cultures which have used canola seed, previously commonly called rapeseed. With respect to the tremendous value of research and how it has improved production, I say that in many instances we have done more than any other country in the world. I only give these examples to illustrate that the government is fully aware of the value of research to the western farmer, and we are always ready to listen to any proposal from the western agriculture industry as to how to improve the service we provide.

We have advisory committees for our research stations, not in all areas but in those areas where producers make those kinds of representations. I think this system works very well.

There is a challenge before us. The Canadian Wheat Board estimates increased demand for Canadian grain on world markets could permit us to export 30 million tonnes or more each year by 1985. The only way to meet this demand is to increase production, and that means more production research.

My department intends to strengthen its research programs in western Canada. Proposals for additional research on production technology at the research branch's 15 western stations are now being developed. There is a special \$4 billion program for western Canada. As far as I am concerned, a big part of it will be going toward—and we have already made proposals—increased research.

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There are a number of new grain varieties which will be released shortly. They will go a long way toward increasing the production potential of that 30 million tonnes per year up to 1985. Many of these are resistant to diseases which have been important contributors to crop losses in the past. We are also sensitive to the need to diversify western agriculture and develop varieties of new crops suited to prairie growing conditions. The federal new crop development fund has already paid for a lot of valuable new crop research. I am sure the hon. member for Moose Jaw is aware of this fund, because each time I announce a program for an area, I send notice to the