

On the other hand, the power of the minister is definitely limited by the act to grant awards to persons who are farmers in certain low yield or crop failure townships, and in my opinion, if a farmer removes from the township or area in question before the award is made, he is no longer entitled.

Mr. GARDINER: Mr. Chairman, I wish to raise a point of order. The hon. member was reading correspondence with regard to the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. I do not think we should be discussing that act at present. We shall have time to discuss that, but the definition of a "farmer" in these regulations does not compare with that in the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. In these regulations, "farmer" means an owner operator or tenant operator of a farm. And "farm" means the total land being farmed by any one farmer. There is no reason for determining residence or anything of that kind in connection with these regulations. There might be some difficulty about the definition of "farm", but I do not see that there can be much about the definition of "farmer" as we have it in these regulations.

Mr. FAIR: As the same body will administer both, I think one would look for exactly the same judgment, unless something is clearly laid down.

The CHAIRMAN: The point of order is well taken. The rule is clear: speeches in committee of the whole must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under consideration. The item or clause under consideration here is to provide for payments on reduction in wheat acreage. Therefore the question of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act is irrelevant.

Mr. FAIR: I said I was using that simply as an illustration.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not permitted to read correspondence except briefly to support an argument along certain lines provided for in the rules. Furthermore, the subject-matter that the hon. gentleman is now discussing is totally foreign to the item before the committee.

Mr. FAIR: It was simply used as an illustration. The minister has now got the point I wished to bring before the committee, and I hope it will be taken into consideration.

Another point is in section 8 which says:

The minister may withhold payment from any farmer who submits a false report of his acreage or a false claim for payment.

Under that section as it is drafted, perhaps ninety per cent of the farmers who would be entitled to a bonus might not get it, because if a farmer goes by his drill measurement, as

[Mr. Fair.]

some do, in many cases he will be ten per cent below the actual measurement. In other cases the farmer may go by the actual measurement; and if they give drill measurement in one case and actual measurement in another, they will be disqualified. I should like to see this clause amended by inserting the word "knowingly" after the word "who" at the end of the first line of this clause, to take care of that situation.

Mr. ROSS (Moose Jaw): A moment ago the minister mentioned different cases which have been brought up, and among them he mentioned new land broken this year. While the regulation in that regard is being considered, the department might also consider the case of a farm that was not under cultivation in 1939. We will say it was part of an estate. By 1940 some other farmer had arranged to take over that land, and in that year summer-fallowed a considerable portion of it, although there was no wheat on it in either 1939 or 1940. A situation of that kind should be provided for under the regulations.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): The minister was dealing with exceptional cases for which provision will have to be made under the regulations. I should like to suggest another such case. In a large part of the south-eastern section of Saskatchewan, as the minister knows, there has been no crop at all for the last eight or nine years. For the last few years it has been so dry that it has not been worth while putting in seed; it would have been a matter of throwing good money after bad. In many of these districts the farmers have not put in crops for a long time. If a farmer had a dug-out, he probably had a little garden near it or grew some feed, but serious farming was not attempted in the sense that it was carried on in years gone by. This year in many of those districts they had good fall rains and a fair amount of snow, and as a result probably many of those farmers will sow wheat again. Some provision will have to be made for them, because in many cases they have not had an average of ten acres in wheat in the last few years.

While I am on my feet I should like to mention one other point along the line of the remarks of the hon. member for Battle River. In the case of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, as an illustration, the minister brought down regulations, and then the Department of Justice brought down an interpretation of those regulations. In my humble opinion, in many respects that interpretation nullified the whole spirit of the act.