

do not think that is doing all that is necessary in the producing of that seed. No one seems to have any definite idea or knowledge as to why in some years the seed will set and in some years it will not. I urge upon the minister that definite experimental work be done in this connection. I do not know just what work is being carried on at Saskatchewan university, but I imagine something has been done there. Some work should be done in the area directly affected; the minister should establish more stations in this area to deal with this problem, which is of vital interest to the people there. It is seventy-five per cent of their living, and something which kept them off relief in the last two or three years prior to the war. The growing of alfalfa seed is a subject on which there is much to be learned. I should like the minister to comment on that.

Mr. GARDINER: There are three stations located in the area where the alfalfa is being grown. The difficulty in the growing of alfalfa has as much to do with soils as with anything else. It has been found that there are sometimes deficiencies in the soil and experiments are being made to determine what may be lacking which the alfalfa plant requires. Then the farmers will be advised what they ought to do to give the soil what it requires. It is true that scientists are not at the stations. I am sure the hon. member for Melfort will agree with me that they do not lend themselves to a set-up sufficiently large to provide for having scientists stationed there, but we have laboratories located at Saskatoon, which is the educational centre in agricultural matters in the province of Saskatchewan. There is located there a forage crop laboratory. As to the seed not setting and questions of that kind, they are referred to our representative, Doctor White, at Saskatoon, who operates that particular laboratory. The other matters having to do with soil are referred to the soil section. We work in association with the college of agriculture in Saskatoon in relation to soils, and scientific men are located at these centres. We have men who do scientific work in connection with soils at Swift Current. We do not put them at stations located here and there in the different provinces but put them at central points; the results of experiments carried on at the experimental stations are referred to these men and they conduct scientific investigations and give scientific advice on these matters.

Mr. WRIGHT: Is there any man who makes a study of this particular question?

Mr. GARDINER: Doctor White has an assistant who does nothing other than alfalfa work.

[Mr. Wright.]

Mr. BLACKMORE: What success has been attained in the experiment of raising sugar beet seed? Our sugar supply has been cut off by the war, and this is an important question.

Mr. GARDINER: The work in connection with sugar beet seed is done at the central experimental farm here and at Summerland, British Columbia. These are two farms at which we find it advisable to carry on that work. We have met with marked success. The beet seed can be grown successfully here.

Mr. BLACKMORE: There should not be any difficulty in raising enough beet seed to supply Canadian needs.

Mr. GARDINER: I understand we could raise all the seed here necessary to supply the requirements in Canada.

Mr. BLACKMORE: And at a reasonable cost to meet competition with German seed?

Mr. GARDINER: The costs are fairly comparable with those in the United States, but they are not as low as on the European continent.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: We in this group are very much in favour of the plan the minister has outlined for getting materials relating to his estimates before members of the committee on agriculture and other committees as well. I suggest that if some announcement is made beforehand as to what particular items will be presented to the committees members may be able to have some representative from their group ask questions with regard to a particular item when it is impossible for them to attend. Personally I can say for this group that we are so busy with committees that often the overlapping makes it impossible for us to attend all committees. I think the move is one in the right direction, and it should be extended to other departments to prevent the disgraceful spectacle which we have sometimes when a few members sitting here pass millions of dollars in the dying days of the session, without any questions being asked. Has anything been presented to the committee with regard to the development of the sheep industry from the point of view of mutton and wool?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes; that has been done.

Mr. CASTLEDEN: What item is that?

Mr. GARDINER: It is not in print yet. Mr. Hamer gave information in that regard, but it has not yet been printed. It will be in print within a day or two.