

Agreements Respecting Marginal Lands

on agriculture and rural life in Saskatchewan, hon. members will find farm income figures given on page 31 of volume 13, 1957, the year this report was published. Hon. members will find tables there which point out that the figures for 1950, as opposed to the figures for 1956, which I have just given, show that 26 per cent of the farmers in Saskatchewan produced less than \$1,200 per year. Using the same figures for Canada as a whole—using again the figures for 1950—the percentage figure was 38 per cent. Thirty eight per cent of the farmers of Canada had a gross cash income in 1950 of less than \$1,200.

These figures which I have just quoted from 1950 do seem to be much worse than the figures quoted for 1956 in the report of the dominion bureau of statistics. The difference arises from the fact that they used different criteria. In 1956 the criteria used by the dominion bureau of statistics was the estimated annual production which, of course, would include the value of the goods produced on the farm. The 1950 figures, on the contrary, are based on the value of the goods sold, or in other words the gross cash income of the farms. The difference between 38 per cent in 1950 and 21 per cent in the 1956 figure produced by the dominion bureau of statistics is explained by the difference in criteria.

Recently a report was published under date of September 1, 1960 by the conservation council of Ontario. The report was to the government of that province. I should like to read to the committee one paragraph which I find in that report. At page 34 we find these words:

It has been reported in an earlier section of this report that we have in Ontario 33 million acres of land south of the pre-Cambrian shield. About 20 million acres of this is being farmed but only 12 million acres can be considered good land. We have, then, a large acreage outside the 12 million acres which could be used for non-agricultural purposes without damaging significantly our ability to produce good and cheap food in the future.

I have read that section of the report to the committee because it leads up to their recommendation that this marginal land should be vacated where economic farming is impossible. I should like to emphasize that here in the banner province of Ontario, one of the great agricultural provinces of Canada, 40 per cent or 8 million acres of the land presently used for agriculture could be wisely turned to alternative uses.

The situation indicated by the figures I have given is not new in Canada. It goes back many years. Last session the special committee of the other place on land use in Canada studied the question of marginal and

submarginal land use. Their recommendations, found at page 248 of the second report, are well worth reading. I should like to place these on the record for the information of those who study this debate:

Whereas there is a need of elimination of problem areas in Canada where farm businesses are small, productivity low, and incomes inadequate for family requirements: The committee recommends,

(1) (a) That further research be undertaken to define more clearly the nature of the problem in low income areas and to pinpoint their location.

(b) That a federal-provincial rural development program be instituted to deal with areas of greatest need.

(2) That in implementing such a program the provincial governments participate on a co-operative basis; such co-operation to include the principle that both provincial and local authorities assume major responsibility for the identification of problems and needs of local areas and the initiation, planning and development of appropriate action programs.

(3) That the federal and provincial governments co-operate in assisting any such program with financial and technical assistance, said financial assistance to be provided through a cost-sharing agreement.

(4) That the federal and provincial governments provide for a larger farm-management service and expansion of educational facilities with particular emphasis on leadership to ensure a prompt dissemination of the research results to those farmers who will be most benefited therefrom.

(5) That there should be some form of co-ordination of federal departments of agriculture; northern affairs and national resources; health and welfare; labour; trade and commerce; fisheries; forestry; and citizenship and immigration with regard to activities under a rural development program.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): What about the sixth recommendation?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): In reply to the interjection of the hon. member for Essex East, in which he asked about the sixth recommendation, I should like to present this to the committee as an example of the profound interest taken by the hon. member in agriculture. There was a sixth recommendation, and this is what it says in the first sentence:

(6) That the special committee of the Senate on land use be reconvened at next session of parliament—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That is right. The hon. gentleman does not want it to reconvene. Would the hon. member permit a question? Is it not a fact that my hon. friend does not want the committee to reconvene at this present session of parliament?

Mr. Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): I am presenting here what I hope will be one of the major steps in a co-ordinated national program in agriculture. I had hoped that the committee would look at this in a non-partisan way.