

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not wish to get into the intricacies of these regulations; I would not be competent to deal with them, but I have had a haunting fear all the way through that this estimate of \$35,000,000 is not going to be the measure in dollars and cents of the amount the treasury will have to expend by way of this assistance. The other day the minister himself indicated that in connection with this matter there would be governor general's warrants and what-not. What does the minister visualize, in dollars and cents, as the extent of this aid to western Canada, no matter what the incidence may be? I am not concerned with that at the moment. Could this run to \$100,000,000, or some comparable sum, or is it to be fixed at \$35,000,000? That is the question I am asking, and I think the public should know the answer.

Mr. GARDINER: I hesitate to make prophecies, although I have made one or two with regard to western Canada. For example, when we were discussing the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, the then leader of the opposition asked the same question. I stated at that time that the cost would be somewhere between \$10,000,000 and \$15,000,000, and the actual cost was just a little under \$10,000,000.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That was a good margin.

Mr. GARDINER: Well, that was pretty fair; it came out just about as it was stated. In connection with the matter, I do not see any possibility, by any legislation that you could place on the statute books or any resolution that you could pass through this house, of persuading the farmers of western Canada to cut their wheat acreage by more than 9,000,000 acres.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): You think it would be too abrupt?

Mr. GARDINER: I do not think it is a possibility at all. The outside amount that could be paid under this policy, on 9,000,000 acres, is \$36,000,000, at the rate of \$4 an acre. If the farmers of the west put half that acreage into coarse grains and grass, then that amount would be reduced by a quarter. If they put three-quarters of that acreage into summer-fallow, as I said the other day, this would mean \$24,000,000 for summer-fallow and about \$6,000,000 for the remainder, or a total of \$30,000,000. I do not see that there is any possibility of the figure going up to even \$36,000,000; but in order to provide an opportunity for the farmers of the west to increase their returns this year by \$36,000,000, if they are inclined to do so, this amount is being provided. We lay before the

[Mr. Graydon.]

farmer the method by which they may so increase their returns; we say, "If you want to cut down your wheat acreage, you can get this money this year. If you do not want to, you will have to wait until somebody wants to buy your wheat before you can get that money."

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): All right; so far so good. We remember what the minister has said. What will be the cost of administration, having regard to the very high percentage of cost under these other assistance acts to which the minister has made reference? I understand that the cost under some of those measures has been as high as 30 per cent, which is, of course, an extraordinary cost.

Mr. GARDINER: The other evening we put through an item of \$384,000, speaking from memory, which was the administration cost in connection with an expenditure of close to \$7,000,000. That is scarcely 30 per cent. It is too high, I think, and I have maintained that it is too high; but again I submit it was the action of this house that was responsible for at least half that expenditure last year. I tried to argue the house out of it but failed, and we must follow the legislation in making our expenditures. The Prairie Farm Assistance Act and this measure will be administered partly under the same organization, and I would say that the cost of administering the two measures should not greatly exceed half a million dollars.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is why you are combining them?

Mr. GARDINER: Yes.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

After Recess

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. WRIGHT: Mr. Chairman, in the particular section of the country from which I come there are large numbers of farmers who have moved in from the south to reestablish themselves on quarter-sections. This movement has occurred in the last year or two, and they have very little land under cultivation, most of them having only from twenty to forty acres. This legislation will work a great hardship upon them if they cannot deliver more grain than the regulations permit. If the government cannot see fit to increase the amount of grain which these people on these small acreages will be able to deliver, I suggest that they give some consideration to changing the regulations in connection with the delivery of malting barley.