

department believe they have carried on those experiments for a sufficient length of time to demonstrate what they had in mind to demonstrate.

There were other reasons why it was decided that the Rosthern farm should be closed with a view of reducing the expenditure on experimental farms. But I wish to emphasize that, had the department and their officials had their way, those farms would have been closed sooner or later irrespective of the war; and since there is a war on, and it was necessary to keep down expenditures this year in connection with experimental work, it was thought that any reductions should be made at places where, in the opinion of the department, work should be discontinued in any event.

A special reason why it was thought wise to choose the Rosthern farm as an object of reduced expenditure is that it operates a comparatively short distance from Saskatoon. At Saskatoon we have a forestry farm which is developing trees suitable for the northern section of Saskatchewan. Also at Saskatoon is an agricultural college of the provincial government, associated with the university of Saskatchewan. If I remember rightly, that farm contains 1,600 acres of land, or ten quarter-sections. Much of the experimental work, particularly with forage crops, which was being carried on at Rosthern is now being done on the Saskatoon farm. Therefore it was not considered necessary to continue that work at Rosthern and it has been discontinued there for some considerable time. The work which has been conducted there for the last number of years has had to do with the development of live stock for that area, and the breeding of hardy fruits has been experimented with during the last two or three years.

In view of this experimental work which is being carried on at Saskatoon by the province, and at the forestry farm at Saskatoon; in view of the further fact that we have one experimental farm at Melfort, to the east of Rosthern, and another one at Scott, to the west of Rosthern—

Mr. ROWE: How many in the province?

Mr. GARDINER: There are five in the province—we decided that the Rosthern farm should be closed at the end of the present year. Some representations have been received as to other uses which might be made of the farm either by the province or by groups of people in that section, but I do not think I am in a position to discuss these representations with the committee at the present time. It may be sufficient to say that

the suggestions have to do with ways and means of utilizing the farm with the aid of expenditures to be made from elsewhere. But those discussions have not gone sufficiently far to warrant me in saying that the proposals will materialize.

With regard to the officials I would only say this, that I do not believe there is any man working in connection with agriculture anywhere in Canada who spends longer hours and gives more conscientiously of his time to the work than the present deputy minister of the department. I have had reason during the last five years to know the time that he gives to it and his ability to be the chief administrative official of the department. The entire speech of the hon. member for Rosthern has been the finest eulogy of the officials of the Department of Agriculture to which I have listened in this chamber. If those officials were giving a service which was so well thought of and which could be appropriately described in the terms used this evening by the hon. member for Rosthern, then those officials must have ability second to none among the people who are interested in the promotion of agriculture in this country. That is one of the reasons why, when a question was asked on the administrative item as to whether it would not be well to close those farms and operate them merely as crop-producing units for the purpose of indicating whether a farm could be run as a paying proposition, I preferred to leave the discussion until this point, because I was quite certain that, when I would intimate to this committee that we were going to close some of those farms, there would be many who would be prepared to rise in their places and say that those experimental farms had done real service in every section of Canada, and that if we attempted to close down any one of them and utilize it merely to demonstrate whether money could be made at farming, we would soon find from all corners of the chamber the most decided opposition to that procedure.

I want to say again that the speech delivered this evening by the hon. member for Rosthern demonstrates that the departmental officials are doing a good job and that the people in the areas where those farms are operating realize that they give valuable service. I am sorry that the time has come when we believe it necessary as well as advisable to close them in the interests of future experimental work in this country. I am pleased that it is possible to do so at a time when certain sums of money, totalling \$185,000, can thereby be released for expenditure on the war services of the country.

Mr. ROWE: Did the minister state how many farms and stations were being closed?