

Wheat Acreage Reduction

\$20 million obtained from this plan. I do not really know at this stage, but I would be highly skeptical of the \$100 million figure that has been kicked around in Ottawa. If it was the intention of the government to imply it would put \$100 million in the hands of Prairie farmers, I suggest this is a fraud and a hoax: I do not think it will happen.

Let me refer to another feature of this plan which might be regarded as useful. If I had a field full of wild oats or couch grass, I might think this was a good time to summer fallow this field twice in a row. I think a hard-headed farmer would look at this idea and think it might be a good thing. A farmer with a large surplus of wheat, probably a farmer who has already adopted some other alternative, might say, "Let us cut back a couple of hundred acres. What is the difference?" He might do so, collect his \$6 an acre and do with the land what he is able to do. So much for the good features.

I should like to make one or two comments about the speech of the Minister of Agriculture. I believe his estimate that 75 per cent of the farmers would have enough grain on hand for two years is not correct; I think it is too high. I have heard many comments about how much surplus grain there is on the Prairies. Admittedly, there is quite a large surplus; I am not trying to minimize the problem. But from my own observation and from what I hear in the country—and I have a lot of good grain land in my constituency—as well as what I hear from elevator agents and the like, there is not as much grain there as the Minister of Agriculture and the press have indicated. This dates, not only from the stories I hear but from my experience back in the 1950s and early 1960s to the time we had a surplus. There was not that amount there.

● (10:10 p.m.)

There is a point that disturbs me, and that is that \$6 an acre is not enough to pay for summer fallow even on large and efficient farms on the edge of my riding. It seems to be implied by some speakers here, and in what we read in the press, that someone will make money out of this and that it is a good thing that the government is putting all this money into western Canada. I suggest that this is a minimum-income type of plan and that no one will make anything out of it. It may help a little to keep the economy alive, but that will be all. If the government is successful in cutting back 22 million acres and cutting

down 500 million bushels, it will save about \$50 million a year in storage at 10 cents a bushel a year. I think my figure is as unrealistic as the \$140 million that some people have mentioned. I realize the government will save some money if its program is successful.

Around 8 p.m. tonight I received a telephone call from a farmer from Herschel who was quite concerned about this program. He said it looks hasty and ill-conceived. He says that we will have one big summer fallow field from the Rocky Mountains east. We will have a dust bowl if we have difficult weather conditions, but if we have a good crop year we will have a billion-bushel wheat crop. I am sure the minister has thought about these things, but he should determine what this program might do to some individual farms. I think it will make things much more difficult for the smaller farmers because they have fewer alternatives. I believe this will create an extremely awkward problem if the government says to them, "If you do not cut back, you will not get a quota". What are they to do?

I should like to speak for a few moments about the sales program of the government. I have argued since I first came here that the government was not paying enough attention to the sales program and that it has not done as much as it could. I should like to quote from a paper which was presented to the Harrison Hot Springs Liberal conference by Dr. Knott of the University of Saskatchewan, in which he said that out of a total sale of 600 million bushels to underdeveloped countries Canada's share is 20 million to 30 million bushels. He went on to say that we can do something about this. It is unfortunate that apparently no one at that Liberal think-in was listening to Dr. Knott.

The wheat crop in western Canada is a renewable resource. It has been a renewable resource which has brought much of the new money to Canada in the past years. It has also done so just recently. We must remember that in an average year, from \$500 million to \$1 billion new money has been brought into Canada in foreign exchange. This has pumped life into our economy.

It has been suggested that a dollar return from other sources is multiplied three times, while a dollar return from agriculture is multiplied six or seven times. This has pulled Canada out of a hole when our balance of payments program has become a problem. Are we going to abdicate from the foreign market because things are a little tough? Are