

*Canadian Livestock Feed Board*

from individual producers and trucked to their mill. The result is that the local producer is always at a disadvantage. He is always suspected of wanting to sell grain which may have a higher moisture content and various other disadvantages in comparison with western feed grain, and he is never given the benefit of the doubt when he has superior grain to sell. All these factors taken together militate against the eastern producer being able to satisfactorily compete with the imported western feed grain.

What have been the effects of the feed grain policy on maritime agriculture over the years? I would not be so unfair as to ascribe the situation entirely to the policy which has been in effect. The facts of the matter are that although the world population is growing, and although many countries of the world are increasing their agricultural production, Canada is only doing so to a very limited degree.

• (1:00 p.m.)

In the ten years from 1953 to 1964, the average increase in the physical volume of agricultural production in Canada was at the rate of only 1.2 per cent per year. In the United States this increase was 1.8 per cent. The production of Prince Edward Island did not change. In New Brunswick the increase was only .7 of 1 per cent. The increase in Nova Scotia was 1.2 per cent. We like to think of ourselves as making great progress in agriculture in Canada. We like to think of ourselves as an advanced country agriculturally. Our effort in increasing the production of food over the last ten years compares very unfavourably with that of other countries, some of which we think of as being underdeveloped.

For example, in the same ten year period the average annual increase in agricultural production in Israel was 9.7 per cent. There is a whole, long list of countries ahead of Canada in so far as this increase is concerned. They are Mexico, Tanganyika, Yugoslavia, Venezuela, Brazil, Greece, Iran, the Argentine, Chile, Colombia, Pakistan, Tunisia, and then comes Canada. We are away down the list. In that rather sad picture the maritime provinces have been doing even worse than the rest of Canada.

In the five year period from 1956 to 1961, the latest year for which I have figures, the area of improved land in the maritimes declined from 2.3 million acres to 1.8 million acres. In other words, half a million acres of land went out of production in the maritime

provinces during those five years. At the same time, in the three prairie provinces there was an increase of almost five million acres in the amount of improved land. I cite these figures to demonstrate the great potential in the maritime provinces, especially in Prince Edward Island, for an increase in production. The most obvious place in which this increase should occur, I think, is in the production of feed grain rather than importing so much from the west.

I am in full agreement with having a supply of western feed grain assured at reasonable prices. However, the west should not be looked upon as the source of all grain for eastern feeders. I believe that locally produced grain should be looked upon as the first source of supply and western grain as a subsidiary supply. We in the maritime provinces are in the ridiculous position of producing something like only half the meat we consume. There is a tremendous potential not only for bringing into production hundreds of thousands of acres in the maritime provinces which were once in production but also for increasing the production of those areas now in production.

I should like to quote briefly from a statement made by an official of the Acres Company, Mr. George E. Hunt. He said:

Can the maritime region produce more grain? I have here a chart which shows the effect of limestone on our highly acid sandy soil and just two levels of fertilization on oat yields. These aren't textbook figures but agronomist's data from actual work in the maritimes.

It has been demonstrated that we can have a five-fold increase in the maritimes through the use of fertilizer and lime. If we had even a twofold increase in our grain production on the land that is now producing grain, plus the bringing into production of some of the thousands of acres of land that once formed prosperous farms in the maritime provinces and are now dismal stretches of abandoned land growing up in scrub, there would be a great benefit not only to the feeders and producers of meat in the maritime provinces but to the whole economy of the area.

In closing, there are some recommendations I should like to make to the minister. I recommend that when the advisory board is constituted it have adequate representation of eastern Canadian feed grain growers. I should like to think that a more satisfactory way could be found to give some encouragement to farmers in the Atlantic provinces who would like to produce more feed grain than the mere subsidization of the import of