

have the right, which they to-day do not have under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act, to go to the courts in order to secure their rights?

Mr. GARDINER: I am not a lawyer, and am not familiar with many of the statutes; but I do recall in all my experience in connection with government, either provincial or federal, that anyone who wants to sue the government has to get the permission of the government. I think they would have to do that in this connection. I do not think, however, there is anything in these regulations or anywhere else that prevents any person from applying for the right to sue the government.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): I do not wish to get into any legal argument; I should like to get the minister over where "we farmers" can talk to him. I think the discussion that has gone on is a good argument for the point we took in the beginning that this matter should have been dealt with by a bill which would go on the statute books.

By regulation No. 2 provision is made that a man's wheat acreage reduction bonus shall be on the basis of the difference between the number of acres he has in wheat this year as compared with last year. I imagine most western members are in the same position as I am, getting letters almost every day pointing out that this will penalize those, usually the better farmers, who started in, immediately after war broke out, to curtail their wheat acreage. I know many farmers, especially in the heavy wheat belt, who last year summer-fallowed half their land. There were others who were not as far-sighted, and who put a great deal of land into wheat. The good farmer is going to suffer most. Last year is going to be taken as the basis; the difference between what he had last year and what he has this year will be much smaller in his case than that of the farmer who put almost all his acreage into wheat; this year 65 per cent of that will be what he would normally put into wheat, and what he would summer-fallow would be what he would normally summer-fallow.

There are two or three ways by which that could be got around. One is that an average be taken for the last few years instead of merely last year. I know there is a provision later to deal with 40 and 60 per cent; but I mean the average over the last three or four or five years.

Another suggestion which came to me from a number of farmers is the possibility of assuming a percentage. Assuming the average farmer has put certain percentages, say 40 per

cent into wheat and other percentages into summer-fallow; let us set that as a basis and then say: We now expect the farmer to put 30 per cent into wheat, and the difference between the 30 and the 40 would be the amount on which he would be paid the bonus. That would establish some principle that could be worked upon. Otherwise the minister is going to have almost endless trouble; people complaining, saying: "I am a good farmer; I have summer-fallowed 50 per cent; I am going to be summer-fallowing my land twice over if this continues"; and pointing to other farmers who simply disked the land and put in a big crop last year and who are not going to suffer under this regulation.

This afternoon someone said that this whole scheme should be under one minister. I am not going to argue the merits of that suggestion now, but certainly something should be done to have the two aspects of this plan coordinated. Actually they are not coordinated at the present time; for, while we talk about 65 per cent of the normal wheat acreage, actually, according to the statement of the Minister of Trade and Commerce this afternoon, we are going to take only about 45 per cent or, in a normal year, 50 per cent of the wheat crop. The hon. member for Swift Current spoke about taking 15 bushels. I think that is the minimum. The chances are that the quota will never reach 15 bushels. If 230,000,000 bushels is to be the maximum accepted for delivery and we reduce by 33½ per cent the 27,000,000 acres of last year, this will bring us to 18,000,000 acres; the most we can talk of as an average is about twelve bushels to the acre, the average last year being eighteen and, for the last ten years, sixteen to the acre, so that even if the farmer cuts his wheat acreage to 65 per cent of normal, he is still going to be allowed to sell only about 65 per cent of that.

Mr. GARDINER: But he can grow it on less acreage.

Mr. DOUGLAS (Weyburn): Yes, but then we ought to be frank and say that what we are really doing is cutting the farmer's wheat acreage to about 45 to 50 per cent. Instead of that we talk about 65 per cent. Under the intimation given by the Minister of Trade and Commerce we are going to take only 45 to 50 per cent. I can see no reason why, if there is to be a reduction, that reduction should not be actually 65 per cent. If the average crop this year were to be sixteen bushels to the acre, the quota would have to be raised so that the wheat board would take 288,000,000 bushels. Certainly something ought to be done so that we are not talking about 65 per