

*Supply—Agriculture*

for irrigation purposes. Unfortunately, the dam which was built last year did not contain a single drop of water this year and consequently was of little use in taking care of the drought condition that developed. I am hoping that at the earliest opportunity the government will proceed with this project.

I quite realize that what the Minister of Agriculture states may be sound when he says that, first of all, the government has to complete the St. Mary river project and the dams on the Bow river. We have had his assurance—I hope I am correct in saying we have received his assurance—that when these projects are completed the government will then be prepared to proceed with the construction of the Red Deer diversion project. This can be regarded as a self-liquidating project. It would irrigate a half million acres and it would be possible to increase the population of that area by thirty thousand people. Services are already established. It would be a worth-while project and would relieve the government of a great deal of expense in the way of Prairie Farm Assistance Act payments, because those payments are not made on irrigated land.

I notice that when the last dam was built on Berry creek, instead of making provision for taking the water by ditches onto the land, provision was merely made for letting the water out into the creek, and that any lands to be irrigated from that project will apparently have to be irrigated through the sprinkler system. I believe the sprinkler system is becoming recognized as the most efficient form of irrigation, and that over a long period of time the actual cost of irrigating the land by this method may be just as cheap as, if not cheaper than, when it is done by ditches. But on the other hand the initial cost is heavy for the pumping equipment and the pipe. I understand from the local P.F.R.A. representative in Acadia that the federal government are making a grant of \$350 toward the purchase of aluminum pipe. At a later time I hope the Minister of Agriculture will be able to say something on that matter, because there seems to be some uncertainty as to whether or not that money is actually being paid. I should like to have an assurance that it will be paid. Then I hope it may be possible to get the provincial government to match that payment, because if irrigation is to be done by the sprinkler system instead of by ditches there will be a great saving of money not only to the federal government but to the provincial government as well; and the provincial government may very well make a contribution toward the cost of the pipe in order to avoid paying for the cost of ditches.

There are other matters that I should like to discuss with respect to the Prairie Farm

[Mr. Quelch.]

Assistance Act but, as the minister has already suggested, I think it would be better to leave matters of that kind until we come to the individual items. When we come to the item with regard to the P.F.A. Act, I hope the minister may be able to intimate briefly what form of amendment is to be brought down. I am not asking him to tell the house what the amendment is, but if he will tell us whether or not the amendment has to do with the establishment of the basic unit, it would be a guide to us in a discussion of that kind; because if an amendment is to be brought down to deal with the very thing we want to have done, it will not be necessary to take up the time of the house in discussing that point at this time. On the other hand, if the amendment that is to be brought down is not of that type, a number of us would like to make suggestions as to what type of amendment might be brought down.

**Mr. Gardiner:** In answer to that last question I might say that I thought I stated to the house in the last session that the bill which was prepared has to do entirely with that question, namely, the unit upon which payment is to be made. As far as I know, the bill will be brought down in the same form as that in which it was then drawn. I also think I said in the last session that I was quite prepared to submit that bill to the committee on agriculture so that it could be discussed there and so that all ideas could be brought forward at that time.

**Mr. Hansell:** I do not propose to make a speech, but I should like to ask the minister a question which I am not certain comes within any specific item under his estimates. Would he care to say whether he thinks the announcement made by the Minister of Finance last night with regard to the devaluation of our dollar will have any effect on the present agricultural agreements with the United Kingdom? I know that the minister is aware of the wizardry performed by these economic experts, which goes on behind the scenes. He expressed himself on that subject when he was in England some time ago. Some of us are not so conversant with that wizardry. I am quite certain that the farmers of this country are not crack economists, but I am sure they are concerned as to whether or not the dollar devaluation will affect those agreements. I know that some of those agreements are in force for only another year. But considering the little that we know about the operation of international exchange, I think that the committee should have an expression of opinion from the minister on this matter.

**Mr. Gardiner:** Just in a few words I would say that the agreements which we have with