

Supply—Agriculture

tomato industry in California, a growth which has had such detrimental effects on the industry in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada, is because for years California undertook a program of research to develop tomato strains particularly suitable to their climatic and soil conditions and as a consequence of that research their production today is probably the greatest on the North American continent.

I realize that not all the solution of this problem of agriculture in British Columbia is to be found in a research program but I would ask the minister to seriously consider the suggestions which have originated in the industry and to accept the fact that there is room for a research program to be undertaken probably at Summerland to develop strains of tomatoes that will increase both the production and volume of the industry in British Columbia so that the industry can survive without artificial assistance.

Mr. Pugh: Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the words spoken by the hon. member for Fraser Valley and the hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke. I should like to take this opportunity of saying a few words about the Summerland experimental farm without going into too great detail. I have often wondered the extent to which Canadians realize the tremendous amount of important work that is done by this experimental farm in the Okanagan valley. Your appreciation of it increases when you think of the many things they are working on including varieties of trees, the development of various strains with the assistance of the British Columbia fruit growers in deciding on what they should do, research into what fertilizers to use, experiments with spraying and spraying materials and finally the by-products which are many and for which a great deal of credit is due to the experimental farm. I cannot resist mentioning the last great success they had which was something that is not advertised in the province of British Columbia; I refer to their excellent apple cider.

Mr. Rapp: Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask the minister a question or two. Could he give us some information about the grants that are given to the University of Saskatchewan and the national research council in Saskatoon? Lately they have made wonderful research discoveries with respect to edible oils and their use. In his remarks a week ago the minister mentioned that his department had set up some pilot plants to ascertain how some of these edible oils could be improved or made more readily available through commercial markets. Perhaps the minister would amplify those statements.

[Mr. Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke).]

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank the hon. member for Fraser Valley for his remarks. He is uniquely qualified to speak with knowledge in this committee on the work of the experimental farms and the research branch of this department.

The hon. member for Okanagan-Revelstoke raised a matter about which there was some discussion last Friday, the tomato situation in British Columbia. I should like to assure him that research is continuing in attempts to produce better varieties of tomatoes in that part of the country. That work is being carried on at Summerland.

I should like to say, however, as I said last Friday, that I think the main difficulty with respect to tomato production in that part of British Columbia is the lack of humus in the soil. It is a matter of improving the richness of the soil in that regard more than anything else, I believe, if the production per acre of tomatoes is to be increased to the point where it will be an economic operation.

The hon. member for Okanagan Boundary mentioned briefly the experimental station we have at Summerland. This station has done an extraordinary amount of good work as far as horticulture is concerned and particularly in terms of fruit growing. That work is continuing at an even more greatly increased tempo than in the past.

The hon. member for Humboldt-Melfort mentioned something I referred to last week, the setting up of a pilot plant to determine to what extent rapeseed might be made use of in the production of margarine. This was done by a commercial concern which is in the business of manufacturing margarine and was not done by the department itself.

Mr. Winch: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I did not hear all the remarks about vegetable production in British Columbia and particularly with respect to tomato production and canning in the Okanagan area but I heard a little of what was said and would ask the minister to reconsider and review the latter question. I was pleased about the information given by the minister when I raised this matter the other day and I appreciate the fact that he came to me afterwards and showed me certain graphs, charts, records and the results of investigations made by his department under his instructions relative to the situation. I immediately dispatched to interested persons in my riding a copy of *Hansard* for that day telling them I was interested more in their comments on what the minister had to say that day than in what I had said. Perhaps he could answer some of the questions raised by the replies I received.