

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 30, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MISCELLANEOUS ESTIMATES

Sixth report of Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates, in the two official languages—Mr. Leblanc (Laurier).

[Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

* * *

[English]

HIGHWAYS

TABLING OF ALASKA HIGHWAY TRAFFIC STUDY

Hon. Arthur Laing (Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I beg leave to lay on the table copies of a report entitled "Alaska Highway Traffic Study, Summer, 1971", in both languages.

* * *

AGRICULTURE

ANNOUNCEMENT OF PLAN TO HELP OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES IN MARKETING CANBRA RAPESEED

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the House of approval for an assistance plan to help overcome the interim difficulties in marketing the Canbra or low erucic acid type rapeseed produced on some 400,000 acres last summer. A two-pronged approach will be taken. On the one hand, assistance will be provided to encourage the movement of Canbra rapeseed into commercial channels for both domestic crushing and export sales. On the other, measures will be taken to defray extra costs of assembling and holding for export purposes Canbra rapeseed that otherwise might be lost through mixing with regular rapeseed.

This action is being taken to smooth the transition of Canada's rapeseed production to the new varieties with low erucic acid content.

The conversion program which started in 1970 has progressed well and farmers now have ample seed of the new varieties for 1972 planting. However, the Canbra rapeseed produced for crushing has not moved rapidly enough for conversion purposes because of the large quantities of regular rapeseed in trade channels.

It is necessary to take this action to assure early use of the Canbra stocks. In this way we can provide that Canbra oil will be available to the food processing indus-

try and conversion can move forward without disruption next year.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, if the government is doing anything in this regard we will be very happy as it will be the first time they have done anything to help rapeseed producers.

Mr. Olson: That is not true.

Mr. Baldwin: It was only under the administration of my right hon. friend from Prince Albert that steps were taken to bring rapeseed from a zero position under the former Liberal government to make it viable.

Apart from those few general comments, Mr. Speaker, I simply say we will watch these two prongs, how long they are and how sharp they are, and see what happens. The government has told us nothing and the minister has told us nothing. We will watch with interest to see what happens.

Mr. Olson: You just do not understand.

Mr. A. P. Gleave (Saskatoon-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, the minister has said that approval is being given to an assistance plan to overcome interim difficulties in marketing low erucic acid type rapeseed. He has not specifically said what will be done to accomplish that objective.

I am reasonably sure the minister knows what ought to be done. What the farmers of western Canada really want to know at this time is whether or not the emphasis next year should be on planting low erucic varieties or on the standard varieties they have been planting up to this time. Questions were asked in this regard at the outlook conference but were not answered. We were informed that the government was waiting for reports from commissions representative of government and industry that are currently overseas.

• (2:10 p.m.)

The difficulties in the marketing and in the crushing industry have stemmed from lack of clear direction and decision up to this time. They stem from a lack of clear acceptance of these varieties by the crushing industry in Canada and by those who are purchasing our rapeseed overseas. It is up to the Department of Agriculture and the food and drug people to come through with clear direction to the farmers as to where they are going in this very important crop.

Mr. Olson: We have.

Mr. Gleave: This has not been done. On that direction hangs a big piece of the farm income in western Canada. If you look at 100 million bushels you are looking at over \$200 million in gross income, and the future of the rapeseed crop is hanging on this kind of decision.