

Supply—Agriculture

per cent during the last ten years. Does the department carry out research into the cost of production of farm machinery and its relationship to farm costs?

Mr. Harkness: We have been carrying out some studies along those lines, but this question really comes under the economics branch rather than the research branch which, as I have said, carries out scientific research more from the point of view of the natural scientists. We have also been co-operating with people in the universities and elsewhere, in various provinces, who are engaged in studies along the lines which the hon. member suggested. As far as the particular matter of farm machinery costs goes, it really amounts to this: the increase in the cost of farm machinery is due to the same factors which have brought about an increase in the prices of practically all manufactured goods, namely the generally increased cost of labour, materials and so on.

Mr. Hicks: I do not want to delay the passing of these estimates, but I believe I would be remiss if I did not say a word about the great research branch of our Department of Agriculture. Having been on the experimental farm at Agassiz for 37 years and, two years prior to that, at Lacombe, Alberta, and also at Brandon, Manitoba, I feel I know something about the past and present of this fine institution which I have no hesitation in saying is one of the greatest of its kind in the whole world. These great dominion experimental farms and research services are amalgamated now, but at first all the research work was done on the experimental farms. Not too long ago the research service and the experimental farm service were separated. Now they have been amalgamated again, and it seems to me that that is all to the good, because all those who are qualified and interested in certain aspects of the work are able to work together as a team in their efforts to solve the problems which arise.

This particular item concerns assistance for research work. I do not think it covers universities. Perhaps all hon. members present do not know that the federal Department of Agriculture makes small grants to the universities in respect of certain agricultural work. Then there is a great deal of co-operation between the federal Department of Agriculture, the universities and the provincial departments of agriculture. Some hon. members may have the idea, I imagine, that there is a great deal of duplication in this work, but I can assure them that such is not the case—it is not a matter of duplication, but of co-operation. Some of the trials which are carried

on are carried on in several different places around Canada simultaneously, with the result that more is achieved in one year than could have been achieved in many years under the old system.

I feel that this fine research work which is being carried out is closely related to the salaries paid to our best men. If it is necessary to pay increased salaries to our best men in order to retain their services, I believe this should be done. If the funds available are restricted, I suggest it is far better that we should eliminate some of the work which is of lesser importance in order that we may retain the services of our top men, men who have for years and years been learning this job. We do not wish to see them walk off to some other country to take up other posts with implement companies or industrial concerns. Let us keep our top research men in the country.

In closing may I say that the people who work in the Department of Agriculture belong to one of the greatest groups in the whole civil service; they are dedicated men and they are not too worried about whether it is five o'clock, six o'clock or nine o'clock when they finish their tasks.

Mr. Fleming (Okanagan-Revelstoke): I should like to take this opportunity to say a few words about the serious condition facing the tomato industry in British Columbia. This industry has been in serious difficulties over the past several years, so much so that during the last three years it has been necessary to sustain it by the protection of the stabilization act.

There are many contributing factors to the decline of the British Columbia tomato industry, an industry which has been established in the province for over 50 years. I am informed by highly qualified people, commenting on the situation that exists in the Okanagan valley, that one of the most pressing necessities is to find a new strain of tomatoes, plants particularly adapted to the soil and climatic conditions of southern British Columbia, particularly the Okanagan and Kamloops areas. A few years ago—as recently as 1958—the experimental farm at Summerland did valuable work on the development of a strain of tomatoes resistant to disease. This was an effective program, and valuable results were achieved, but it is clearly obvious that if the industry is going to continue in British Columbia this other problem of developing tomato varieties specially suitable for growth in the south central section must be tackled.

The people engaged in the industry have told me many times that the reason why there has been such a tremendous growth in the