

of Agriculture. Rapeseed, as hon. members know, has a very high acid content. As a result, its marketability was not superior in terms of cereals. The Canadian research and development effort was led by the Department of Agriculture. It reduced the acid content from approximately 40 per cent to about 2 per cent, making that product immensely attractive to the international community. I am advised that to date, in terms of our investment in canola oil research, we have a \$100 return for every one dollar invested. In 1961 we received \$12 million from canola. In 1981 we received \$600 million gross farm cash receipts from canola. In 1943 we only had a few hundred hectares of canola. In 1980, we have over two million hectares of land under canola cultivation.

• (1630)

I am interested in this because I recognize that because of the pride we have in canola, we go out and peddle it. We ought to be doing that and will now do that in other areas. There will be substantial advancement toward the development of new, marketable products in Canada.

I had the good fortune of being in Lethbridge, Alberta last week.

**Mr. Thacker:** It is a great place.

**Mr. Blais:** It is a lovely place. It is very similar to North Bay. It has approximately the same population, the same racial mix—not as many French-Canadians, but we might work on that. That particular community is farm-oriented, as you know, because it is in southwestern Alberta, an area most affected by the chinook winds, making it relatively dry and very prone to the growth of winter wheat.

During my visit to Lethbridge I was briefed by the director-general of the western region, Dr. Andrews, about the research and development effort being carried on in Lethbridge. I was subsequently taken through the station by the scientists responsible for various sections. Can you believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is only one of 15 research and development stations? There is \$50 million spent in western Canada on research and development every year. I do not know how much the building cost, but I would wager that if you had to replace the research and development station in Lethbridge, it would cost \$50 million or \$60 million.

At that station they are doing research on basic soil conditions. Of course, their efforts are concentrated on the particular soils found in southwestern Alberta and the conditions affecting that soil. They are studying the adaptability of that soil to new products with regard to the atmospheric conditions in that area.

Of course, they are doing basic research on cereals and the blights, spores and various weaknesses that affect those particular cereals in order to develop resistant varieties. They are doing this with specific application to southwestern Alberta.

They are also involved in a science which I had not heard of before, although I have been bugged by them a lot. The science is called parasitology, which is the study of parasites

which affect cattle. I was very interested in this with relation to northern Ontario, because the blackfly is one of the parasites which is undergoing study, especially at Lake Talon, which is infested with blackfly during the summer. It may be possible to control them. I say that lightly because the hon. member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis) has a cottage on Lake Talon. It is only infested when he is there and it clears up when he leaves.

**Mr. Jarvis:** Somebody has to speak for the blackflies.

**Mr. Blais:** The fact is, the blackfly is now being studied to see how we can effectively control it as a pest to the milk-producing cow and other cattle.

In Lethbridge they are also conducting a very serious study in genetic engineering and have had tremendous success in that particular area. Another endeavour which is already providing some profit is the study on raising bees which can pollenate alfalfa.

It was an amazing experience and I invite every member of the House to visit a research station if there is one in their vicinity, to see the kind of Canadian superiority there is in agricultural research and development. As I said, that was only one station out of 15. That one was in western Canada. Sometimes there is a tendency to neglect the federal presence in western Canada—

**Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** No way; we cannot get over it.

**Mr. Blais:** I can say that there is immense progress being made in research and development.

**Mr. Thacker:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I presume the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais) will support the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) when his estimates come up and he asks for more money for research and development.

**Mr. Blais:** Mr. Speaker, I can tell you quite candidly that the Minister of Agriculture can count on me as an ally on most issues. I can tell the hon. member that I also sit on the Treasury Board and I am very sensitive to agricultural issues. I can also tell him that I am very impressed by the government's preparation of the agricultural estimates and, of course, the ability of the Minister of Agriculture to defend his departmental estimates.

I should emphasize my own interest in this because there are many farmers in my riding who are all very productive and progressive and wish to be even more successful than they are. Since you also come from northwestern Quebec, Mr. Speaker, you will know that I have ministerial responsibility over an area which combines with your area constituting 24 million acres of arable agricultural land. That massive clay belt which covers northwestern Quebec and northeastern Ontario will provide us with foodstuffs, not only for our domestic market but for the international market, for some time to come.