



One of the combines at work on Canada's rapeseed acreage in the Imperial Valley, California.

RAPSEED INCREASE

The harvesting of Canada's rapeseed acreage in the lush irrigated fields of the Imperial Valley, California, is in trouble. The Span variety of rapeseed was grown there this winter to provide Canadian farmers with seed for planting this spring.

Frost had already severely reduced a crop that looked exceptionally strong. It was a freak frost, the worst in 20 years, and it took away most of the crop.



D.A. Cooke, of the Department of Agriculture's Melfort, Saskatchewan Research Station, examines the rapeseed crop.

The combines moved into the first field on the afternoon of March 31. When the harvest began, they were barely crawling as they experienced difficulty threshing the crop. They were in fact, halted or moving backwards more often forward. By dusk, only 15 acres had been harvested, by three combines, and one half-filled box on a 10-ton truck was all there was to show for the effort.

The combines are moving slowly during the harvest because, though the stalks are still green, the seeds are ripe. If the drivers put enough wind through the combine to clear the stalks, they will blow the seed out of the back of the combine. If they reduce the wind, the combine has to shuffle along slowly to clear the stalks.

EXPERTS ARE OPTIMISTIC

Nevertheless, the people working with the crop are still confident of realizing 1 million pounds of seed — just enough to start a two-year massive switch to varieties low in erucic acid.

New Span, a *Campestris* type (or turnip rape) low in erucic acid was the only variety planted in the Imperial Valley and in several fields in Arizona. This was done to provide the extra seed necessary to multiply adequate seed this summer for 1972 planting and a substantial quantity for crushing into oil and meal this winter.

Despite recent problems, the rapeseed-increase program is a success. The government officials who picked the growers and areas for seeding in the Imperial Valley did an exceptionally fine job, according to D.A. (Doug) Cooke of the Melfort, Sas-