

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Forgie: Mr. Chairman, the minister has heard me on this before, but I do take an interest in farm products because I did take a great interest in the soybean business. We had a plant in Toronto which developed into a \$2.5 million plant, and I am wondering whether any research work is being done along these lines, particularly in the two western provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

It has always been my belief, rightly or wrongly, that if this soybean, which is a legume, could be developed successfully in the province of Manitoba it would forestall a great amount of wheat growing and probably allow the farmers a better livelihood than they have at present. The development in Ontario has been spectacular. They started in 1934 with two or three thousand acres and at the present time I think the figures show 176,000 acres in southwestern Ontario, in seven, eight, or nine counties in the district.

As a matter of interest, I would like to say that in 1955 we exported from Canada 945,000 bushels to the United Kingdom; in 1956, 1,119,000 bushels; and in 1957, 1,508,000 bushels. We exported to Germany in 1954 27,600 odd bushels; in 1955, 7,000 bushels; in 1956, 56,000 bushels; and in 1957, 44,800 bushels. Of course, that is not a large export, but at the same time if this crop can be successfully developed in the western provinces then we will have a further opportunity of exporting soybeans to the continent of Europe where they are in great demand in such countries as Denmark and other countries where they are used for feed purposes. If that could be done we would considerably enhance our foreign trade.

Mr. Chairman, if I can give one illustration to show how important research work is on this question. In 1935 a friend and I who had the first soybean plant gave the farmers of Pelee island 400 bushels of soybeans as a present. For at least the last 20 years Pelee island has been shipping through the Toronto elevators a crop worth \$350,000 each year. So one can see it is a matter to be taken seriously and I am wondering whether the dominion government uses any of its research money on soybeans or whether it is left solely to the provinces.

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Chairman, as the hon. member for Renfrew North has said, I have been aware of his interest in soybeans and the development of a soybean industry and of the steps he has taken himself to promote that industry in Canada. We have through our research activities done a great deal with soybeans. As a matter of fact, the variety Harosoy, which is perhaps now the one most widely used of any variety grown in Canada, was

[Mr. Harkness.]

developed at Harrow at our experimental station there. Experimentation is continuing with the purpose in mind of producing soybean varieties which are better adapted to other areas; varieties with a shorter growing season which would be hardier, and so on. By this means we hope to be able very considerably to extend the area in which soybeans can be grown successfully in Canada.

Mr. Forgie: Just one other observation before I sit down. I thank the minister for that explanation. As he knows, about 1935 or 1936 we started to grow a few acres in conjunction with Dr. McCloskey in Winnipeg. I have forgotten whether it was at the University of Manitoba or the agricultural section, but anyway there are now about 15,000 acres of soybeans growing at Morden, Manitoba, as I understand it, and the great difficulty is that of the development of a bean—is this right?—which would ripen before the early frost and, second, a bean which would have sufficient oil content. They are the two problems, are they not, in connection with the work going on?

Mr. Harkness: I would just say in that regard that work on soybeans has increased quite considerably recently at our station at Morden, Manitoba, particularly having in mind producing a type of soybean which would give a better oil yield and have a shorter growing season. We hope to develop strains which will prove more hardy and need a shorter growing season. This would enable the planting area to be extended through the Red river valley.

Mr. Forbes: I was interested in this item because it is one which relates to farm production costs. I should like to refer to the statement made by Mr. J. P. Hudson who conducted a farm management study for the University of Manitoba. Mr. Hudson told the annual meeting of the agricultural bureau of the Winnipeg chamber of commerce that operating costs for an average size farm had gone up to \$15,238 annually from \$4,800 about 15 years ago. Of every \$1.13 an average Manitoba farmer receives, he needs \$1 to cover expenses, and only earns 13 cents.

I was wondering whether the federal Department of Agriculture makes any contribution toward research of this type. If we examine Mr. Hudson's report a little further we find that the price of farm machinery is one of the largest items of expense. I would suggest that representatives of farm implement manufacturers should appear before the committee on agriculture with a view to determining why machinery prices have increased by approximately 100