

Mr. GARDINER: Of course I must take my information from the officials of the department, and they tell me there has been no change in the price of fibre seed. I think what my hon. friend may have in mind is the quotations we see in the newspapers from day to day for flax, but that is not fibre seed. I am informed that fibre seed has remained at a practically set price for the last four or five years. Certainly there has been no increase or decrease since last year, because last fall we took possession of all the flaxseed there was in Canada. We did that because in the last war, if I remember the situation correctly, that was not done, and because of the limited amount of fibre seed in existence in the world, a small group of individuals was able to get control of that seed and force up the price very quickly. That was avoided this time by the government taking possession of all the fibre flaxseed there was in Canada and simply telling the people in Ireland, who were putting forth an effort to get this seed very early in the season, that the government had all the seed, which would be distributed first to those we thought should be growing flax this year in Canada, and then the remainder would be distributed to Ireland and England. That is still the position. We have in Canada a few hundred bushels of the flaxseed that was not distributed last fall, but there is a very small amount left. So far as I know there has been no variation in price since last year, because we set the price and it was all handled at that price.

Mr. COLDWELL: Has the minister any information to give the committee with regard to the development of rustless wheat? I believe the central experimental farm is working on an improved strain of regent wheat. There was some criticism of regent wheat last year, I know, in the area round Rosetown. I know one grower who shipped his regent wheat because he did not care for it. It was graded No. 2, while the thatcher and apex were graded No. 1. I wonder if that was on account of the fact that it was not breeding true to type. What experiments are being conducted, and is an improved strain of regent or rustless wheat being developed at the central experimental farm just now?

Mr. GARDINER: Regent wheat is possibly as good as any of the rust resistant wheats which exist in sufficient volume to be distributed. Certain investigations are being carried on with regard to other varieties. Possibly it could be said that in certain areas some of the varieties being developed would be more suitable than regent wheat. Anyone who has grown wheat in western Canada

realizes, I think, that there are certain varieties which grow well in the open prairie country and produce high quality wheat, which, if grown up in the northeastern section of the province, would not produce as much to the acre or such high quality wheat, and vice versa. There are wheats that grow well up in the north and keep their colour well which, if grown down on the prairie, would not produce to the same extent or the same quality. Experiments are being carried on, but I do not think it would be wise to make any statement which would lead people to believe that there may be a better wheat in existence than regent, until such time as we are certain both with regard to the variety itself and with regard to the amount available.

Mr. COLDWELL: Then I should like to ask a supplementary question. Last year I believe the department distributed a great deal of regent wheat in small quantities. How did the results last year compare with thatcher and apex? Could the minister give us any information as to the experience of the department?

Mr. GARDINER: It would be very difficult to answer the question in a general way, that is, to say one was better than another. In some districts regent was better than thatcher or any of the other varieties. In other districts apex was better than the others. I do not know that I could say thatcher is better than the others, yet in some districts the yield of thatcher was considerably better than that of the other varieties; and taking into consideration the quantity obtained per acre, along with the grading of the wheat, probably thatcher paid the farmers better than the other varieties, in those particular areas. I should not like to say one was better than another. Personally I like the look of any of the wheats better than thatcher, particularly in a difficult year, but last year, with the conditions existing, I had it proved to my own satisfaction that thatcher produced more than any other kind of wheat I have attempted to grow on the farm I operate in the west.

Mr. PERLEY: I think the experiments carried on with respect to rust resisting grain is of tremendous value and benefit to western Canada, and I believe the department should be commended for the work that is being carried on. There is however, one thing I should like to impress upon the minister. As he knows, the experience with rust resistant wheat has been that when we get a variety which is nearly one hundred per cent rust resistant, it retains that quality for only a few years. For instance, marquis used to be practically rust resistant, but now it is almost