

Supply—Agriculture

I should like to quote from another article which appeared in the press. This says:

Fears that western Ontario soybean growers may switch to corn and other cash crops unless deficiency payments on beans are raised were expressed at the annual meeting of the Lambton county soybean growers' association here today.

Again, Mr. Chairman, I should like to quote from an address by the Minister of Agriculture in which he says:

I believe there has to be a much more general realization on the part of consumers generally, and that of city dwellers particularly, that the farmer is entitled to increased returns to the same extent as workers in other industries. At the present time an hour's labour secures more food than, I believe, at any other time in our history, and several times as much as an hour's labour in most other countries. Unfortunately this comparatively low cost of food has been, to some extent at least, at the expense of the Canadian farmer.

I should like to say a few words also in support of the suggestion that the government should continue, and if possible increase, the encouragement that has been given to the production of sugar beets. I believe sugar beet production was raised last year as a result of this encouragement. I may not be exactly correct in this, but I believe that in 1957 there were some 14,000-odd acres grown in southwestern Ontario, and as a result of the encouragement given that acreage was raised to over 30,000. I believe that it is quite possible that the acreage could be raised to over 40,000 acres. In fact, I believe the sugar companies are willing and are out now negotiating contracts in the hope that they will get 40,000 acres. I believe the incentive that was given by the action of the government in guaranteeing \$13 a ton for sugar beets had a very beneficial effect, not only in connection with the production of sugar beets but also in helping to relieve the over-production of other things which would have been grown had that acreage not gone into the production of sugar beets. I do feel, therefore, that the government can take some credit for what they did in that connection.

I should like at this time to refer to a statement I made, and which is recorded on page 959 of *Hansard* for November 11, 1957. It reads:

I should like to say a few words in connection with soybeans. I understand there is a tariff or duty of \$1.20 per bushel against Canadian soybeans entering the United States while United States soybeans enter Canada duty free. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, if the Canadian regulations were balanced so as to provide the same protection for the Canadian producer as has been maintained for the United States producer it would change the position of the soybean producers of this country from that of a poorly paid business to one which would pay well. At the same time it would encourage the production of more soybeans which the figures show are needed in Canada.

[Mr. Campbell (Lambton-Kent).]

At the same time I feel quite sure this would draw land out of the production of other things which it would seem are being overproduced at the present time.

Mr. Chairman, my opinion is still the same on that matter. To sum up, may I suggest that I feel it is not only possible but desirable to give encouragement by way of price supports to these things, namely corn, soybeans and sugar beets. If we do this it will tend to bring about a change on the part of those farmers who are producing other things in excess of the needs of the people of this country. I believe that the sugar beet growers of western Ontario, if given a bit more support, would increase their acreage by 10,000 acres. This would be of mutual benefit to both producers and manufacturers, yet would come far short of supplying the Canadian need for sugar. I also believe that if sufficient protection and remuneration were assured the producers of soybeans, a probable 200,000 acres would be required to produce sufficient of this crop to fill our domestic need. In addition I believe that if sufficient protection and remuneration were provided for the corn producers to encourage them to produce the requirements of our country for corn, as outlined by Mr. Green, the secretary of the commercial corn growers in the letter I have just read, another possible 200,000 acres could be devoted to the production of corn.

I am sure, Mr. Chairman, you will readily recognize the effect that this would have by diverting approximately 410,000 acres of the highest producing land we have in southwestern Ontario from the production of cattle, grain, hogs, poultry and other things which are now in direct competition with other farmers in other parts of Canada. The effect this would have on those other parts I am sure you will agree would be beneficial. I suggest that if this land were producing other things which are admittedly needed in Canada, it would benefit by many millions of dollars those other parts of Canada that are apparently producing in excess of the people's needs.

For the reasons I have outlined I would request the government, and the minister in particular, to give the most sympathetic consideration to these proposals: First, that corn be declared a designated product under the stabilization act and made eligible for price support; second, that corn, soybeans and sugar beets be given a continuing assurance of help such as would encourage and justify things which are in surplus to our needs, and tend to bring the production of these three crops up to the place where they will fill the needs of the people. This policy, I suggest, would be of mutual benefit to many