

Canada Grain Act

Mr. H. O. White (Middlesex East): Mr. Speaker, when the house adjourned last evening I mentioned the fact that there were a few matters related to Bill No. 249 which I desired to bring to the attention of the minister. While the matters I may touch upon do not deal particularly with the amendments now before us, I believe this is the only opportunity I shall have to bring them to the attention of the minister. These are some of the things in which the growers of cash grains in southwestern Ontario are interested. In schedule D of Bill No. 249 I notice there is a reference to white pea beans. The beans in which the southwestern Ontario growers are interested are soybeans and not those beans mentioned in this schedule.

On April 15 last a meeting of the soybean growers was called in Chatham. All hon. members in southwestern Ontario were invited to the meeting, and certain proposals were placed before us. Most of those hon. members are as interested in this matter as I am. The fact is that the soybean growers find themselves with only one or two buyers in Canada. The net result is that in most cases there is only one buyer, and one can realize the position in which the growers are placed in that case. Not only the soybean producers, but the producers of corn, fall wheat and other grains are interested in having the Canada Grain Act extended to the area of southwestern Ontario that is now engaged in the growing of cash grains. In pursuing the matter after the meeting of April 15 I addressed a letter to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe), asking him the proper procedure for those growers in having the Canada Grain Act amended so that it would embrace southwestern Ontario. I shall read a paragraph from the minister's reply:

Consideration will have to be given not only to the individual amendments that would be required to the Canada Grain Act but also to the extent to which the principle of this legislation, framed originally to apply to grain that is, in the main, marketed interprovincially and internationally, could be made to cover the marketing of crops that are sold wholly or chiefly within the province where they are produced.

That directs our attention to some of the difficulties with which these growers are faced. I wish to point out, and I believe it is significant, that the soybean growers of southwestern Ontario are not asking for subsidies nor for floor prices. In a country in which nearly every commodity group is asking for subsidies or floor prices, one must pay a little attention to a group of producers who say they want neither floor prices nor subsidies.

A large increase in soybean acreage is expected in the United States. Since we are

[Mr. Cruickshank.]

an importing nation so far as soybeans and soybean oil are concerned, an extremely heavy production of soybeans in the United States might result in a serious price drop, or the government might support the price in the United States and dump the surplus products on the Canadian market. The Canadian growers fear that possibility. I point that out so that you can see the position in which these farmers find themselves.

In order to give the house some idea of the enormous increase in the production of soybeans in southwestern Ontario, I might say that in 1945 the production totalled 842,000 bushels. This figure has gradually increased during the years, until in 1949 there were 2,600,000 bushels produced. When it is realized that this production means keeping Canadian dollars at home instead of sending them abroad to buy American soybeans and American oil, it can be seen it is an important factor.

Mr. Cruickshank: Will the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. White (Middlesex East): Yes.

Mr. Cruickshank: What is soybean used for normally?

Mr. White (Middlesex East): I understand that some of it goes into margarine.

Mr. Cruickshank: I hope that they all fail.

Mr. White (Middlesex East): I think that is outside the question at the moment. It was your government that put the Canadian farmer in this fix, and I am suggesting a means of helping him.

Mr. Cruickshank: Our government did not get them into it.

Mr. White (Middlesex East): It certainly did. It was not the province of Ontario that got them into it, anyway. I should like to refer to the importation of oil from the United States. According to *Foreign Trade*, published by the Department of Trade and Commerce, in the month of January, 1950, there was \$2,111,000 worth of foreign oil imported into Canada. If we can encourage these growers in southwestern Ontario to continue growing soybeans, possibly we can reduce that expenditure of Canadian dollars on foreign oil. I just mention this in passing because, as I said in the beginning, I realize that this possibly is not the place that this can all be done. But I am going to use here the resolution passed by the Ontario soybean growers; and by the way, their association is set up under the Ontario products marketing act. I will read you the entire resolution and the facts that they have put before us leading up to this resolution.