

I N T R O D U C T I O N

"I have attended many congresses and conferences in the last 20 years, but I have never found one like the one in Ste. Adèle. Very well organized, most interesting and useful and the atmosphere extremely pleasant. I really look forward to the next time."

These compliments expressed by one of the European participants of the first international rapeseed conference held in Canada reflect the enthusiasm and excitement which pervaded the gathering of nearly 400 scientists, technologists and businessmen from 20 nations at Ste. Adèle.

Although ranking in fifth place among the world's edible vegetable oils, rapeseed oil has shown a spectacular growth in recent years. In 1964 the production was reported to be 1.12 million metric tons, while the 1971 forecast indicated a total of 2.34 million tons, more than double within a span of 7 years and now amounting to 11% of world edible vegetable oil production.

Canada's contribution was equally spectacular. As a result of the state of the grain economy in Western Canada, farmers had doubled in 1970 the 1969 record rapeseed acreage of 2 million acres to 4 million acres. About 70 million bushels of rapeseed equivalent to 630,000 metric tons of rapeseed oil have to be marketed.

In the midst of this growth, nutritionists had raised serious questions regarding the effect of a major component of rapeseed oil, the erucic acid, upon the health of animals and the implications for humans. The scientific and business communities had to meet to evaluate the situation and to determine what the future held in store for this industry.

These Proceedings will provide the answers to many of these questions.

Looking back at the brief history of the rapeseed industry in Canada we may be most optimistic and regard the current stage as a phase of the continued growth of oilseed production in various parts of our country. In 1943, just 27 years ago, rapeseed was introduced into Canada at the request of the wartime Oils and Fats Administrator.

Previously about 2 million pounds of rapeseed oil had been imported annually as a high grade marine engine lubricant. The seed was to be "grown as a war emergency crop only", and in 1943 there was insufficient rapeseed available to grow the requested 10,000 acres! From a butter and lard economy we have since developed a modern edible oil industry. From a net importer of edible oils, we have developed to a net exporter of edible oils and oilseeds. Rapeseed is the main explanation.

Plant breeders are promising further progress

- in adapting rapeseed and other members of the Brassica species to Canadian agricultural conditions,
- and in improving the chemical composition to meet more closely the demands of the edible oil refiners and feed manufacturers.

The diversification of Western agriculture will continue to move to the production of edible oils and proteins. It is possible now to anticipate 10 million acres of these new oilseed varieties, producing about 2 million tons of edible oils and 3 million tons of high protein feedstuffs to assist in feeding mankind. Will the reviewer in 1980 agree?

If you desire additional copies of these Proceedings, send your request to:

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