

*Rural Development*

resources are both conserved and utilized beneficially, not only for the immediate future but on a long-range basis. Perhaps the minister recognizes the value of some of the studies carried out from time to time by that association, but let me say that in my opinion it is a useful organization which receives little recognition for the many contributions it has made.

We will have time to discuss this bill in greater detail when we reach the committee stage of consideration, but there is one other matter I should like to discuss. In one of the last clauses of Bill C-152 there is reference made to advisory committees which I would more broadly term local committees. The minister is making a mistake if these advisory committees are to be confined to consideration on the basis of provincial advisory committees. It is my opinion that local committees could be very useful and could perhaps be the key to the initiation of development programs which will be most useful to communities. We should not be reluctant to give a great deal of recognition to these committees. If the members of such committees spend time away from home, working in an advisory capacity to provincial committees, consideration should be given to the paying of their expenses through the ARDA administration. The work that they will be doing will in fact be of assistance to the communities.

Possibly the best suggestions that can be made will be made by local committees. As the hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Jorgenson) has said, if this kind of program is to be a success, it is essential that local feelings be taken into consideration. He also said that the experience in the United States has been that wherever there has been too much paternal activity with respect to the negotiation and development of programs there has been failure, and that the most successful programs have been those which were initiated at the local level by men and women who were completely familiar with the local problems of the community.

It seems to me there is sufficient authority in this bill to allow the minister to recognize these local committees and make arrangements for payment of their out-of-pocket expenses. I hope there will be no difficulty regarding the payment of these expenses so that these people will feel a little more free to devote their time, energy and talent to the discovery of the kind of programs that will be most beneficial to their local communities.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, in light of what the minister has said, I should like to make a very brief comment. While I did not hear all of his remarks, I should like to congratulate him for the very reasonable attitude he has taken. As a minister with the support of the new wing from Quebec, I think he has given us an example of how he is now able to undertake his responsibilities in a more flexible manner, and we are very appreciative of that fact.

• (8:40 p.m.)

However, I think there is more in the question of a name than has been said. I understand that the minister indicated he had received a legal opinion suggesting that in order for the intentions and actions of the government to conform with the name of the legislation, there must be this change. But I would point out to him, because of the precedent that might be established, that the Parliament of Canada does have the right under the British North America Act to legislate with regard to matters of agriculture. It has no right to legislate initially with regard to matters of rural development.

I suppose the minister in the legal opinion he received was referred to section 95 of the British North America Act which says:

In each province the legislature may make laws in relation to agriculture in the province, and to immigration into the province; and it is hereby declared that the Parliament of Canada may from time to time make laws in relation to agriculture in all or any of the provinces, and to immigration into all or any of the provinces; and any law of the legislature of a province relative to agriculture or to immigration shall have effect in and for the province as long and as far only as it is not repugnant to any act of the Parliament of Canada.

In other words, initially the Parliament of Canada can legislate with regard to matters of agriculture. It cannot legislate other than by parliament authorizing the government to enter into an agreement with the province. For this reason and in order that the name and intent of the legislation shall conform with the British North America Act—and of course I believe we are all very anxious to make sure this is done—we should not delete from the legislation the word “agriculture”.

I leave it at that, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me the minister is quite aware of my views. I believe they are based on sound constitutional practice, and a departure therefrom might not be as acceptable to the provincial governments as the change that is proposed by our party.