

thirty-five years ago, the subject was discussed there. It was a serious problem all over Canada at that time, and it has been ever since.

After the committee has conducted a full inquiry it must then use the information it has gathered as a basis for recommending ways and means of solving this whole problem of land use. The committee will not get anywhere if it recommends that people move from poor land to good land. This would be a costly scheme that would get us nowhere. The aim is to find out what the land is best suited to produce. If it can only be used for reforestation purposes, that is what it must be used for. The committee must produce a reliable, practical report which will, for instance, enable immigrants to ascertain what kind of land they will find in the district where they choose to settle.

I am genuinely happy to support this motion. It is an assignment that the Senate is better equipped to handle than the other house is. I am sure the committee members will perform a real service to Canada, and one which will be everlasting to their credit. I am confident that for many years to come their report will serve as a guiding light to our own people and to prospective immigrants.

The Leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) was kind enough to consult me as to the personnel of the committee. He made the selections and I concurred in them. There may be other members who might have been named to the committee, but by and large we feel that an able and representative committee has been selected. I trust the Senate will express its unanimous approval of the nominated members.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the committee for accepting the onerous responsibility with which they have been charged. I want to assure them that the Senate will do everything it can to enable them to produce a report which will go down in the records as one of the finest achievements of the Senate of Canada.

Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. R. B. Horner: Honourable senators, I have just a few remarks to make at this time. As honourable members are well aware, Canada has both good and poor areas for agricultural purposes. For instance, there are whole areas where a mould had formed during a period of thousands of years from leaves and similar vegetation. These lands have yielded a reasonable profit to farmers, but in time the mould disappeared. Western Canada has vast grass areas that are good for grazing purposes but not for farming.

A committee of the University of Saskatchewan conducted a survey into soil conditions

throughout the province, and the information gathered is available to the public.

I look upon our vast lands as a heritage of all our people, and some day our children will discover that Canada's most valuable asset is its land. In this connection I am dismayed, to say the least, that it is found necessary to flood certain areas along the St. Lawrence River for the construction of the seaway.

My main purpose in rising at this time is to warn the Government that the construction of air fields and other projects necessary for the expansion of cities and towns should not be carried out on good farm lands. I thought the Premier of Quebec made a wise suggestion recently when he said it may be necessary to forbid the sale of good farm land for building expansion purposes. In the vicinity of Montreal, for example, some of the choicest farm lands have been taken up entirely by buildings. When I pass through there by train it often occurs to me that it might have been possible to build residential and other property on rock or sand rather than on productive land. Such questions will eventually become of great importance to Canada.

Honourable senators, I wish to make special reference to the great fruit-growing areas of Canada. The Niagara Peninsula is Canada's finest fruit-growing land.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Horner: I am told that it is the most valuable agricultural land in the world. We read of enormous prices being paid for it. No doubt a man holding a portion of it might be offered a sufficient price to retire with his family, so there is always the risk that such land may be sold for building purposes. I think it is an awful thing to use rich farm lands as sites for houses and factories, when less valuable land could be secured. What I am saying here applies also to the very valuable fruit lands in parts of British Columbia, where certain fruits are grown that cannot be produced anywhere else in Canada. I think the Government should use its influence to ensure that such lands are not permanently destroyed for agricultural use. It is a great pity to see beautiful heavy clay soil, which is admirably suited for growing crops, laid over with cement for huge airports and runways. If we do not take steps to preserve our good land for agriculture there may come a day when we shall have nothing but desert left. Some of the land in the district where the honourable senator from Rosetown (Hon. Mr. Aseltine) lives has been rated as the best in the country. It is covered with light loam to a depth of a foot, but if that loam were blown off by windstorms there would still be