

*Rural Development*

our forestry industry; it can provide the future for our recreation and tourist industry, and it certainly can provide the basis of a better future for Canadians to come. In all aspects ARDA will be operating in the renewable resource area. Any education now will provide opportunities for Canadians for many generations to come. If we act in a responsible manner the result will be evident for generations. I would not say for all time because it is hard to say what eventually will happen, but certainly in the foreseeable future much can be done.

The minister has indicated three areas in particular which are to be covered immediately under this program. I have no objection to the three areas he has chosen but I am quite sure every member in this house would be able to stand up and name other areas. I should like to know from the minister, however, what preliminary work has been done by the officials of ARDA which warranted the selection of these three areas. In selecting an area to come under this program I would think one would have to be assured that there was a possibility of changing its environment so that it might provide an economic income for the people left in that area.

I was shocked when the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) came into my area during the election campaign and made the statement that the Liberals had a program to solve the farm problem which was for the government to buy the farms, develop them and sell them back to the farmers. From watching the operation of the House of Commons I would say, God help the farmers if this should happen. If they are in bad shape now I hate to think what shape they would be in within a very short time if the administration of farms was taken over in this way.

To give an example of how bad the situation is in respect of agriculture, I notice in *Votes and Proceedings* that a meeting of the Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development Committee is scheduled for this afternoon at 3.30 while the house is sitting. I do not know whether the committee met but they did not have the right to sit at this time because they had not made arrangements to do so. The fact that the introduction of this ARDA legislation today had been known for several days is an indication that really much is to be desired in respect of the operation of the house, but I will not go into that.

[Mr. Peters.]

• (5:00 p.m.)

It does give an indication of what might happen if the government decided on an agricultural policy of buying up all farm land and selling it back to the farmers. This is an idiotic arrangement because all it would mean, if it meant anything, would be that we would have to have a sufficient number of people in the forestry department attached to the ARDA program to operate these units. Surely these people do not intend to get up as early in the morning or go to bed as late at night as the farmers must. It would be doubtful that they could do much better with the facilities available to them than the farmer can now do.

I presume the problem in the interlake area is similar to the problem in the New Brunswick area, although I am not familiar with the situation in the Gaspé or the Magdalen Islands. There must surely be large areas in the county of Gloucester, New Brunswick, as well as in the interlake area of Manitoba where there are small farming uneconomic units. It is doubtful that the farmers will be able to borrow enough money to establish economic units and pay for the extra land and equipment necessary to operate them.

The government through this policy may be able to amalgamate some of the small farming units so that the operators will be in a position to increase their earnings. It is also true that the government may be able to develop the potential of agriculture in some of these areas through reforestation rather than by developing the lands for agricultural purposes. Whatever we do in this regard must be accompanied by direction on the part of the federal government.

In relation to these possibilities the government must keep two factors in mind. There must be a sufficiently broad and comprehensive survey made of all projects to enable the government to be sure that there is a reasonable chance of success. The government must also take into consideration all the ramifications involved in moving rural people from an area which has been occupied by them for generations to urban communities. This transition must be undertaken in such a way that it will cause the least displacement of people in a social sense.

The government must take into consideration another problem which will be raised by the transfer of a segment of our population. Many individuals prefer to remain on farms