

Supply—Forestry and Rural Development

believe that ARDA should render enormous services, that it should bring about enormous developments through the millions of dollars that are expended. To my mind, we should at least see some achievements, some developments somewhere, but we do not see much. Those funds should be used for the development of tourist centers, for instance ski slopes or other similar developments. I think that ARDA has contributed in different areas but not in mine. Several areas of our economy need assistance and should have their share.

● (4:40 p.m.)

My constituency is as much agricultural as any other in the province of Quebec, and I think that not one cent has been provided for land drainage or any similar undertaking. Yet, we have made several requests, we have put considerable pressure on the Quebec government. As a federal M.P., I was subjected to considerable pressure in this matter and the only answer I could give was: We are not managing those programs, ask the Quebec government and if it agrees, then I think the federal government will pay its share. That was the only answer I could give.

I do not blame only the minister in this connection, but I feel he should convince Quebec authorities to extend ARDA activities to larger sectors of the economy. If the federal government pays its share, it can surely have its say, but if the citizens have no say in the matter, it is then better to withdraw. If the province of Quebec is unable to do more than it has done in the past, I think it might as well withdraw. I feel that it should be left to the people to administer and develop their own projects and that better results would be obtained than with ARDA as administered at present.

I would have much more to say, but I do not want to bother the minister further. I realize that he cannot do everything, but I ask him once again not to yield to provincial governments, and to convince them to accept the suggestions made by Ottawa. There should be at least some practical results in the province of Quebec. I think that directives given for developments now carried out under ARDA should not only benefit the wealthy to enable them, for example, to complete studies or spend holidays in planned parks.

If taxes must be levied and if taxpayers must be fleeced just to satisfy the appetite of a few individuals, I for one think that we should withdraw from those programs.

[Mr. Latulippe.]

I know that ARDA is destined to play a great part in the economy but it is limited at the present time. I do not know why. Is the province of Quebec short of money? Is it unable to pay its share of 50 per cent? Is that the reason why all plans peter out? If the province of Quebec is short of money, let it say so. When we meet ARDA authorities, they tell us that they are not short of money, that they have enough funds to spend. If there is money to spend, it should be spent in the proper areas to the benefit of the population and the citizens, and that will contribute to the economic development of each area in need, of each underdeveloped area of the province which pays its share of taxes like all the other areas.

Once again, I ask the minister to make the necessary representations to the provincial authorities to extend the scope of ARDA in the best interests of the nation, the taxpayers and the economic development of our areas, particularly those which are underdeveloped.

[English]

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, I wish to speak briefly in the debate on the forestry department estimates. Another speaker earlier this afternoon spoke of the good work the department had done in some valleys of British Columbia. Representing the Okanagan valley, I can testify to the truth of his words. Our area appreciates the efforts that are being made under the auspices of ARDA. Those efforts principally have to do with rebuilding irrigation systems that were built many years ago when the valley was first developed and when costs of labour and material were lower than at the present day. Because of the changed cost picture the reconstruction project needs government assistance. That reconstruction is progressing well. Its effects are markedly felt in the valley and are appreciated.

One expects the work of this department to bear fruit, literally, and to be practical in the agricultural area. In British Columbia it took a long time to get any of the department's projects going since projects were inaugurated after long studies had been made.

Because of the preliminary work the department had undertaken one could prophesy some time ago that its work would be useful and significant. The farmers need the kind of assistance that has brought into being these irrigation projects. They do not need the sort of announcement which the Department of Agriculture made in the spring, when it announced a national dairy