

Agricultural Rehabilitation Act

to band council funds and give them a measure of self-government by allowing them to vote these funds.

However at the present time Indian bands or reservations are not precluded from the benefits available under ARDA. For instance I am interested in a drainage project on one of the reserves in my riding, which amounts to \$34,000. This project was undertaken by the Indian affairs branch. They consulted the engineers from P.F.R.A. who carried out a study on it; but it did not cost the Indian band itself any money whatsoever. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, that is one real reservation I have about the measure as outlined in Bill No. C-22.

I should like to add my words of praise regarding Mr. Davidson. I have just read a speech he made on November 20 to the federal-provincial agricultural conference. In that speech I think he brought the group up to date on developments under ARDA. Mr. Davidson makes it plain that a large number of these redevelopment or development and conservation projects will be on a regional or area basis. There is nothing now to preclude any Indian reserve from being part of that regional or area development program. I am sure the hon. member from Port Arthur did not have in mind that these ARDA projects would be restricted to a reserve although in some cases they may be. In most instances these projects would be of a type that cover a whole area. As I say, Mr. Speaker, there is nothing now which precludes Indian reserves from being included in those programs.

There is one thing that I have to suggest, and I am sure the hon. member from Port Arthur will agree with it. As he mentioned, most of these programs and the whole idea of ARDA is to get the co-operation of the federal government, the provincial governments, the municipalities and other interested groups such as farm organizations, working together in order to better the livelihood of the people in marginal agricultural and other underdeveloped areas of this country. My suggestion—and it does not have to be put into effect in conjunction with this bill—is that there should be an Indian representative on these committees, especially where there will be projects in which Indian reserves are involved. I would hope that these committees which are set up in the provinces will either include a member of the Indian band or a representative from the Indian affairs department. In my riding at the present time we have a sociologist carrying out some research into various aspects of making the Indian more self-sufficient. Such a person would be of great assistance on these committees and would probably be a good liaison officer

[Mr. Slogan.]

between the band councils and the ARDA committees. It may be even more desirable to have an Indian representative, an Indian chief or some other type of Indian representative. I think this would be a great step forward.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, I have been interested in the welfare of the Indian for a great many years. We have seen the expenditures on these Indian reserves multiply and multiply and multiply. There have been many good capital projects undertaken in the expenditures of these moneys. There have, for instance, been introduced on to reserves rotating herds of prize cattle; not just the scrub cattle which many farmers start with. We give them top grade cattle and after awarding these cattle to a certain family they are allowed to have the offspring. Then after a couple of years the cows are passed on. Some of these projects could perhaps be worked under ARDA, but they have already been carried out at no expense whatever to the Indian band concerned. We have supplied haying equipment and have developed pastures, and so forth. Therefore many of these projects are being undertaken at the present time.

I think it is highly desirable to integrate these programs on Indian reserves into the broader programs of redevelopment and conservation that are taking place. I am thinking particularly of drainage and dams, because many Indian reserves are located along lakes and other bodies of water and they have large areas of very good land that is unusable because of flooding, because the land is low lying or because of various other disabilities. These are some of the things that could be done by inviting an Indian representative or a representative from the Indian affairs branch to sit in with ARDA.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a word about ARDA itself, because it is another of my pet projects. I remember that not too long ago the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act was restricted to certain areas only of the southern prairie provinces. My constituency was cut in half by it. I felt it was grossly unfair that the benefits which some farmers could get from conservation projects, dams, irrigation projects, community pastures, and so forth, could not be extended beyond this rather arbitrary line which was drawn.

Incidentally this act was introduced in the early 1930's, primarily to combat drought. However, as the years went by P.F.R.A. was extended and the projects under it were extended to the point where it was really unfair to restrict it to any geographical areas of the prairie provinces. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it was very welcome when last year this government extended the boundaries of