

*Rural Development*

the proper utilization of resources and the adoption of programs for these Indian reserves.

• (5:30 p.m.)

**Hon. Hugh John Flemming (Victoria-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, the comments I feel impelled to make in connection with this bill are not lengthy, let me assure you, but so far as agriculture is concerned I feel that the bill is an important one. It has a good many ramifications which I think will be of general benefit to people making a partial living on a small farm and who devote some other portion of their time to working in a nearby urban centre.

I think it is proper to pay some tribute to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) in relation to this whole idea and the previous legislation which set up ARDA. I also feel I can properly say that I think we are fortunate, inasmuch as we on this side of the house, do not seem to be able to take the duties of administration entirely upon our shoulders, in that the present minister will, I am sure, do a most creditable job both on his behalf and on behalf of the country.

I believe we must consider the social aspect of the maintenance of the small farm. It has always been my feeling that a special situation exists in relation to maintaining the farmer in a small community. He is the person who contributes to the upkeep of the local church and the local school. He is the person who, in general terms, is the foundation of the rural communities which I think are tremendously important to this country.

I realize that in this day and age there is a definite trend toward the larger farming unit. I appreciate this is due to the mechanization of farming which involves the purchase of very expensive machinery and can only be undertaken by a man in possession of a large acreage of land. As a consequence the trend is away from the small farm.

However, I maintain that this legislation can be used to encourage the small farmer to stay on the farm. We who represent rural communities know that all you need do to find many abandoned farms is to go across the country. These farms are abandoned in many cases owing to the fact that the farmer found it difficult to maintain his family.

I have heard it said that such land should be used to grow trees instead of crops. In my part of the country many of the abandoned farms are now sought after by large food

processing plants such as those in my particular part of New Brunswick. This is because the soil in regions isolated from the general activities of everyday life is practically free from all disease. As a consequence such land is sought after by food processing plants. I find that in my part of New Brunswick this is becoming more and more the case. To my own knowledge these plants are moving away from the thickly settled areas in an attempt to obtain land which has a certain freedom from disease in order to produce crops for which freedom from disease is most important.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would submit to the minister that he should not take as gospel that every acre of cleared land in what might be called back settlements must of necessity be used for tree growing. The soil should be carefully examined and analysed. I do not pretend to be a practical farmer because I am not. But I do know that soil in certain places has characteristics which lend themselves to the growing of certain crops provided that first of all the land is examined by agriculturalists and a report issued.

If I were going to make a suggestion to the minister I would say that before any large scale change in land use is made in any particular community the soil should be carefully analysed to ascertain its suitability for growing various kinds of crops. I might favour tree growing because this happens to be my particular business. I am glad that the Minister of Forestry is in charge of this legislation inasmuch as the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, because of circumstances, is unable to look after it. Speaking in broad, general terms I think it is a good thing to consider tree growing as an alternative to crops.

If I had time I could go into the whole history of the growing of Christmas trees, an activity which has been developed in parts of New Brunswick as well as parts of Nova Scotia. My hon. friend, the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Stewart), knows that the growing of Christmas trees is becoming quite a business there.

I was a little disturbed at the speech made by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Horner) because I am one of those—and I make no apologies for this—who is a sincere believer in the principle of individual initiative and the encouragement of people to look after themselves, in other words, private enterprise. I believe in private enterprise because it develops individuals. That is the way the talents given to us by the Almighty are developed to