

Supply—Agriculture

can be considered as one unit. If that were done, the benefits of good soil practices and conservation would be realized in the whole natural area to which they applied.

There is a great opportunity for education in the Department of Agriculture. It has done a great deal of excellent work in this connection by putting out bulletins of various kinds which are of great value to people engaged in agriculture. Of course the purpose is to bring farmers up to date on the latest methods, make them aware of the results of research that is carried on in the department, and so on. But I have the feeling that a great deal of this information does not get through to the people who need it most, namely those who are not the best farmers. I do not know what methods should be used, but a study should be made of the possibilities of further education. I use the word "education" in the broadest sense in that regard.

The experience I have gained from traveling through agricultural areas that are not especially prosperous has indicated to me that the people of those areas are unaware of the latest methods and the latest information on the best way to carry on the very complex business of modern agriculture. I notice that the Department of Citizenship and Immigration have published a booklet called "Farming in Canada". I suppose the material in it came chiefly from the Department of Agriculture. I understand its purpose is to attract immigrants to the soil of Canada. That is a worthy objective, but I should like to see something similar to attract Canadians to the soil and help them realize the necessity of a greater percentage of our population remaining on the soil and finding means of making that life a financial success.

As I have already said, an important factor in this is the preservation of our water resources and our soil fertility. That is a matter for the Department of Agriculture. I notice that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and other bodies agree with this point of view. In that connection I realize that projects which are anticipated under the Canada Water Conservation Assistance Act, such as dams and engineering projects of that kind, may be very necessary in some instances to serve a useful purpose, but the real point is to create conditions which will allow the rain to soak in where it falls rather than run off. In that connection I should like to quote briefly from an article written by Louis Bromfield which appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post* of March 11, 1950. He had this to say with regard to the United States:

In the past taxpayers, property owners and insurance companies have spent billions of dollars

in repairing damages and in constructing and maintaining and repairing vast dams and levees at the mouths or halfway down our great rivers, when all the time it must have been easily evident even to a kindergarten child with a pile of sand and a watering can that one does not stop floods at the bottoms of rivers, but high upon their tributaries and in the forests and cow pastures. Despite this obvious fact, virtually the whole of our flood-prevention work has been concentrated until now upon huge and vulnerable dams and levees far downstream.

Perhaps I seem to be dealing with this matter at too great length, but I think it is of fundamental importance to the future of agriculture in this country. The time is not far away when we will need practically all our agricultural resources to feed and clothe our own people, not to mention the billions of people in the rest of the world who are short of food. This is all I intend to say now, but I shall have more to say on later items.

Mr. Pouliot: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate what the hon. member has said, but I wonder if he is right in view of an article by Louis Bromfield which appeared not long ago in the *New York Times*. The hon. member quoted Louis Bromfield. In that article Mr. Bromfield said, if my memory serves me right, that one-half of the farmers in the United States were not doing very well, about 40 per cent were doing pretty well and 10 per cent were doing very well. That indicates that the proportion of good farmers is not as large in the United States as it is in Canada, even making due allowance for the difference in population.

The hon. member referred to an article by this same man, who is a prosperous farmer as well as an author of note in our neighbouring country. It gives me hope that farmers in Canada will be in position to compete favourably with their brother farmers in the United States.

Mr. Trainor: I should like to ask the minister two specific questions the answers to which are of great concern to the people in my province. First, does the government intend to indemnify the victims of the floods along the Assiniboine river in Manitoba? Second, what measures has the government in mind to see to it that these flood conditions do not occur again?

Mr. Gardiner: I think the proper place to discuss that would be on the items dealing with that particular matter.

Mr. Trainor: To what items does the minister refer?

Mr. Gardiner: The items dealing with P.F.R.A., or the special items dealing with the control of water.