

Rural Development

At the time of its implementation, this act had three main purposes: first, the subsidiary use of lands or the efficient use and economic development of submarginal agricultural lands; second, the development of rural areas and, third, soil and water conservation.

I think that since its implementation and approval in June 1961, this act has achieved its purposes. It resulted from the work of a Senate committee, known as the special committee on land use, set up by the previous government and sponsored by the then prime minister, Right Hon. Louis St. Laurent.

In 1960 the committee presented a report and the government of the day, headed by right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) had agreed to the report and introduced the bill I have mentioned.

Since 1962 many achievements have occurred under ARDA. I feel it would be of interest to make a brief survey of what has happened so that the honourable members of this house may realize that in spite of the fact that my immediate predecessor, the minister of agriculture Mr. Hays or the hon. member for Qu'Appelle have not given much publicity to the legislation or to its achievements, a lot of work has been done.

I should like to quote just a few figures to indicate how seriously the members of the previous administration and of the present one have all mightily laboured together to improve living conditions in rural communities.

Often during my speeches in and out of this house, I have recalled the important part the hon. member for Qu'Appelle has played with respect to this legislation and again tonight, although he is absent from this house, I should like to point out the admiration which his work as minister responsible for ARDA has aroused. His work has been an inspiration for me, and I am sure if he returns to the house he will support the bill I am moving tonight on behalf of the government.

In 1962-63, during the fiscal year ending March 31, 108 projects were approved at a total cost of \$2 million as the federal government's share.

In 1963-64, the provincial governments having become initiated to the method of operations of ARDA, and the federal government being more familiar with the plan, the number of projects increased to 292 for a

[Mr. Sauvé.]

federal government contribution of nearly \$10 million.

During the fiscal year 1964-65, ending March 31, 1965, the number of programs increased to 352 for a federal commitment of \$21 million.

Between April 1 and November 30, 216 programs were approved representing a total commitment of \$15 million.

I would not want to give a long account of the amounts received by each province. Suffice it to say that Quebec followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba, are the provinces which have most availed themselves of the advantages of that act; moreover, they are pursuing their efforts along the lines they had adopted earlier.

On April 1, 1965, a new agreement entitled the "Federal-provincial agreement on rural development" became operative. This new agreement, to apply for five years, that is, till March 31, 1970, was the fruit of the experience gained in the first three years and of the co-operation between ARDA federal authorities and each one of the ten provincial governments.

When the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) asked me on March 4, 1964 to take over the administration of that act, I immediately undertook to meet the ministers responsible for the application of ARDA in each of the provinces. I visited every province and discussed the matter with provincial authorities and this led, after numerous discussions, not only with the provincial governments but also with various associations and organizations, to the series of proposals we sent all Canadian provinces early in October 1964.

Those proposals were discussed at a federal-provincial conference at the end of November 1964.

One word about that conference: in my opinion, it expressed concretely new administrative concepts in the field of federal-provincial relations, concepts which consist, once the objective to be reached has been set, once the provinces have been consulted one after the other or in groups in order to establish what their aspirations are, in getting them together with a view to reaching an agreement. That is what happened in the case of the new agreement, and all the provinces signed it in the first six months of 1965.

The text, which I now hold in hand was published in French and English, and it is