

Rural Development

wasted talent and frustrated ideals, which need only a little hope and the possibility to solve these problems, and instead of being a burden, let alone a shame for society, they can become an important asset capable of contributing to the progress of the country.

It would be interesting to know exactly the social, moral and economic problems which this human stream, poured as in a single gulf, has involved for the big city. What is the exact cost of this overcrowding of population and public investments necessitated by its greater traffic?

It is easy to conclude that the economic forces left to themselves develop like a cancer killing the best cells of our society, and developing great urban centres which are too large for man and cannot answer his deepest aspirations.

A survey made in Paris among 7,700 families gave the extraordinary result that 80 per cent of them had concluded that if they had the choice, they would prefer to live in the country; 10 per cent were indifferent and 10 per cent were happy with their lot.

It may be easy to conclude that the large amounts invested in housing, which do not really meet the wishes of the people and to say that, one day, we might want to go back to nature, to own property where we could have a garden, a swimming pool, and other facilities, that the dwellings we conceive at a heavy cost might become slums because all those who will have the opportunity to get out and the necessary income to do so, will leave.

Therefore, it is necessary to reconsider the philosophy of urban renewal and to promote instead a better distribution of municipalities and also their opportunity for a more harmonious development.

Areas where sometimes the most dynamic factors have been siphoned out, are faced with ever increasing community charges with a decreasing number of people to carry them. At any rate, society foots the bill.

There is no need to quote all the data of transfer payments or social security or unemployment insurance and assistance in the nine counties represented by the B.A.E.Q. but the minister said in his speech that it amounted to \$83 million.

This is what I call to foot the recession bill. However, 50 per cent of the people work only six months a year in temporary jobs and during winter, the number of unemployed

[Mr. Gendron.]

amounts to 30 or 40 per cent of the available labour force.

Prejudices go around in that respect. We will, of course, get a clear conscience by saying that these people do not want to work, that they are lazy, they do not have the necessary drive, but I should like you to answer the telephone calls of those asking the mayor for the privilege to work in ditches with water up to their knees, in extremely difficult and painful conditions.

If it costs the government a lot and the gap still widens between the more favoured and less favoured groups, this is good reason to increase the measures for industrial development in the designated areas, and to have an overall policy to assist industrial development in the outlying areas.

I proposed, as president of Quebec union of municipalities, the establishment of a department for rural development at both federal and provincial levels. I admire the work performed by the minister and I am firmly convinced that this whole problem of rural development and war against poverty is everybody's problem, in short the problem of every department, of every crown corporation, and every individual.

When a war is threatening, is everyone not urged to contribute to its cost and to share in its problems? I say that this department of national development should be headed by the Prime Minister himself, because only the Prime Minister can effect the required coordination among all the departments, ensure the centralization of their activities so as to make them realize that it is not enough to administer at best their own department, but that everyone should concern himself with promoting a more harmonious development of our economic activities.

This responsibility should be shared equally by all crown corporations and companies, such as the General Financing Corporation, the C.F.U., whose mission should be not only to bring about a general improvement in their particular field but to implement regionalization and decentralization.

If this is nobody's concern and efforts are dissipated, this serious problem will never be solved. Farms should be regrouped so as to increase their economic potential. Our people are ready to do this. The establishment of quasi-agricultural bodies and the marketing of farm products should be promoted. I know that many pieces of legislation and many persons, namely the minister, are concerned with these matters.