

*Agreements Respecting Marginal Lands*

The United States have had one since 1912 whereby federal money and federal leadership are provided in establishing transcontinental highways and in constructing farm to market roads and roads over which school buses travel.

The cost of roads in rural Canada with its diminishing population is one of the heaviest burdens that exist for farmers today. Taxes for roads are high, and if the government wishes to do something that will assist the small farmer and will assist the development of rural areas I suggest that this is a provision that cannot be overlooked. I know that the minister has studied very carefully, and I congratulate him for it, the reports of the Saskatchewan royal commission on agriculture and rural life, and he knows from these reports that very great emphasis has been placed on the need of establishing an adequate road system for agricultural users.

There is another proposal I wish to make and it is one that has been made by members of this group for many years. There should be more adequate provision by the federal government for educational services in Canada. Roads and education represent two of the very high costs that rural people must pay and these costs increase for all rural people as population diminishes and more economic units are established.

The policy put forward in the resolution will help but by itself it is inadequate and in conjunction with other policies of the government will not, the main policy having already failed, meet the chief problems of agricultural income and agricultural markets. The minister is wise in saying that we should not be asked to proceed with second reading of the bill until the government has had a chance to negotiate with the provinces but I suggest that this leaves parliament in a rather invidious position. We are asked to support the resolution and give approval in principle to the introduction of a certain bill which will be given first reading. After we have gone that far the minister presumably will then begin a journey to various parts of the country to discuss a bill which has not been given second reading involving approval in principle by the House of Commons and which may be amended very materially in the normal course of events.

I think the government should have had more particular conversations with the provinces. I think the government should have discussed with the provinces not only its general policies but in greater detail the kind of recommendations it hoped to make to parliament and that the government should have then introduced and recommended a

bill to the house which had been drafted after having had thorough and adequate discussions with the provinces.

I tell the Minister of Agriculture, and with this I conclude my remarks, that the government should do much better in this legislation than it has done in the crop insurance legislation, that under the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act over the years very little of the cost has been placed on the shoulders of provincial governments or on the backs of the farmers. The main cost has been borne by the federal government. The proportionate amount of money spent by the federal government on this program and the willingness of the government to correct its policies with regard to agricultural supports and markets will in the main decide whether or not the future will see established a successful agricultural policy.

**Mr. White:** Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the question about procedure and I feel that if I read one phrase from the resolution it will make what I have to say quite in order. I refer to the words: "and projects for the development and conservation of the soil and water resources of Canada".

I want to congratulate the minister and the government upon the introduction of this resolution which can be very far-reaching as far as agriculture is concerned. I must say that I have had quite a number of inquiries regarding the ramifications of the resolution and the bill which will follow. These inquiries show a very deep appreciation of the work envisaged by the minister in this resolution, and so I take pleasure in congratulating him and the government upon its introduction.

What I want to say will have particular reference to western Ontario, old Ontario. I have just been reading some words of the Prime Minister as found on page 44 of *Hansard* for November 21. At that time he said:

By 1990, unless something is done, Canada is going to run out of wholesome water.

That, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, is only 30 years away. It was my privilege recently to visit Australia and for those hon. members who have not had that opportunity may I say that we do not appreciate to the full the great water resources that we in this country enjoy. The vast interior of that continent is arid or semi-arid, many areas having a rainfall of only three inches or less per year and temperatures for a good part of the time ranging from the 90's to 120. The Australians appreciate water and are making great strides in conserving all that they have.

[Mr. Argue.]