

Supply—Mr. Gauthier

They have been passing the buck for four years, and for four years, the minister has been visiting my riding saying: We will see to it that you have drainage. We are still waiting for it.

We have land that is completely flat: no mountains, no hills. We simply need sufficient drainage to put this land into production.

It is said today that we must be up to date. Of course, we must be up to date, and this is the reason why we are asking for drainage because, in the past, when we had light machinery, we did not need that drainage; but today, the soil which is left gets parched down to about two, three or four inches, and you cannot use modern machinery there, because it is going to get bogged down. This is the reason why we think that we should have more subsidies, and it is the first thing the minister responsible for ARDA should have done; besides, I asked him and advised him to do so.

As for the blueberry patches, why not start things the right way? Every farmer has a blueberry patch on his farm. If those farmers had been given grants, their farms would have been prosperous and the blueberry patches alone would have brought their owners a return of \$1,000 to \$1,500 a year with no trouble at all. But no, they let it go to nothing. As for the blueberry farm co-operatives of the area, they got no grants either. No, they will do nothing for the development of farm land even if that is the aim of ARDA; they cannot touch that; one has to work crown land.

So, they work crown land. Can you imagine such nonsense, Mr. Speaker? We only ask that the amount of \$3 million spent in our area under ARDA be used for farm drainage, to guarantee the sale of their products, to build potato cellars and cold storage plants.

We have marvellous soil for vegetables and when it is realized that the four ridings of Saguenay-Lake Saint John produce only 12 per cent of the vegetables we eat, I say it is a major scandal.

If those millions had been spent on cold storage plants or potato cellars or secondary farm industries in an effort to produce at least what we need to feed ourselves, half the problem would have been solved. Imagine, only 12 per cent of the vegetables we eat are home grown, while the rest come from outside. And we are a farm region.

It seems to me that you do not have to be endowed with above average intelligence to

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see those facts and find an implementing method that would be more rational, more concrete and better adjusted to local needs.

Mr. Speaker, even after having spent all this money in the area—and I agree with the minister responsible for ARDA that he has spent much money—we have to admit that this money has served no purpose.

A good administrator is judged by the constructive results he achieves with the money he was handed over. The minister responsible for the administration of ARDA had \$3 million to spend. And what is left of it? Not a cent for the economy of this area.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Minister of Forestry would be well advised to examine first the farm needs, before asking people to study and lecturing them right and left. Let him see the needs, go out into the field and above all, speak to the farmers, because the farmers are the ones who will help organize agriculture in a given area so that it can be profitable.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, though the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development is away this evening, that he will take note of these remarks. If he comes and sees for himself in order to learn—and not to conduct a political campaign—he will see the amount of patronage in each and every parish, and understand that it is not in the interest of agriculture.

By the way, when a farm organization or a blueberry workers union is established and 95 per cent of union members are from the city and secretaries and treasurers are notaries, and everything else accordingly, at \$2 per hour, I tell you that the farmers do not like it. During the last election campaign, five federal ministers canvassed in my riding from door to door. They went to all building sites and yet, they did not manage too well and will never get anywhere, because the people in my riding know that they are being fooled and are dealing with men who are play-acting.

Until the minister goes to meet the local people and talk with them in order to establish thriving industries that will enable every farmer to earn more than \$3,000 or \$3,500 a year, that is to come closer to catching up with the average income of western farmers, who are complaining although they earn from \$4,500 to \$5,000, while our farmers have to be satisfied with an annual income of \$1,200 per year, he will not accomplish much.

Mr. Speaker, I hope that the Minister of Agriculture, the new Minister of Agriculture,