

Agricultural Rehabilitation Act

federal government to take advantage of the ARDA program? However this is the key concern I have. There is a paternalism in the relationship between the Indian affairs branch and the Indian reserves. I know it varies in different parts of the country but, to use a rather invidious word, it is a severe paternalism in my part of the country where we badly need a greater sense of responsibility and dynamic approach on the part of the tribes and councils. In other words, responsibility has to be given to them for planning and spending their own funds and other funds within some kind of integrated program that makes sense to them.

It is primarily for that reason, to get away from that kind of paternalism that tells them what to do, that hands out rations, health and welfare services, ships them off to hospitals and provides all sort of palliatives to keep them from starving but does not give them the opportunity to stand forth as free men in their own communities and take care of their own economic destinies, that I move the adoption of this bill. The ARDA program will offer them a chance for prideful effort and something they can take real pride in. It will assist Indian reservations such as those at Gull bay, Heron bay, the one at Nipigon and the one at Beardmore, where their lands have been denuded of forests by burning off or cutting over, to fit into the second motivation that Mr. Davidson put so strongly, and which all of us have come to recognize.

I know some people, including many of my own associates, have laughed at this bill and described this as a sort of Christmas tree thing. That is very easy to do, if one does not come from an area the economy of which is based upon very large Christmas trees. But I have told this house before, and I say it again, that the bread basket of our country is no longer on the prairies. The bread basket that is really significant for our economy is in the boreal forest areas, in our spruce and pine which go into the creation of newsprint and various other paper products. If hon. members doubt my word they have only to look at our industrial, manufacturing and export statistics. They emphasize the need for cheap wood close to the mills and the continued increase in the value of this part of our industry to the whole Canadian economy.

I want to see our Indians tied into this more closely than they are at present, and I submit that an amendment such as this could open the way. It would not in itself be that important if the ARDA people in Ottawa in the Department of Agriculture and the Indian affairs branch people, also in Ottawa and across the country, were not prepared to follow it up, but it would give us a chance

to reach the tribes, the bands and the councils and get them working on something in which they can play a very creative role.

For that reason I would hope the house would find the bill acceptable, and if it feels it needs further investigation and testimony on the part of people active in the ARDA program, then it might be referred to the committee on agriculture for further examination and the taking of evidence. I believe there is nothing partisan in this amendment and that there is nothing politically to be gained from it. For that reason I would hope for the sympathy of the whole house.

Partisanship tends to come in when we are discussing extremely controversial matters where emotions run high, such as the issue of a national flag or matters relating to interest rates. We have none of those particular complications in dealing with this bill. It is a simple one and I would ask for the house's sympathy and approval of it.

Mr. Joseph Slogan (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I would like unreservedly to give my support to the purposes of the bill moved by the hon. member for Port Arthur (Mr. Fisher). I have some questions to ask about the bill itself, but the manner in which the hon. member explained his purpose in introducing the bill is most laudatory and I am sure all of us who take an interest in Indian affairs would be in agreement with him. However I just wonder how much real thought has gone into the manner in which the bill was drafted.

I have seven Indian reservations in my riding comprising some 3,500 Indians. Some are areas which could be termed agricultural and some are areas which could not be so termed, but at the present time certain facets of this bill already apply.

The one reservation I have about the bill is the fact that the hon. member for Port Arthur is setting out that the council would be asked to co-operate with the provincial or federal government by voting moneys towards ARDA projects. I do not know if the hon. member ever found out how much the bands in his riding have in their capital funds, but I have gone to the trouble of finding out in regard to the bands in my riding. I find some of them have even less than \$100, some have a few hundred dollars, and the largest one has about \$8,000. Thus one can readily see it would not be very feasible or possible to ask these Indian bands to vote moneys to participate in programs that undoubtedly would require large sums of money. The Indian bands do not have that much, but of course they could get it. The Indian affairs branch could grant this money