

Supply—Agriculture

the present time the farmers are handicapped when they try to obtain help in the labour market. Labourers are loath to accept farm jobs because they are not covered by unemployment insurance. Because of the high wages prevailing in industry it is difficult enough for farmers to obtain the help they need without this added handicap of trying to hire people when those people know they will not be covered by unemployment insurance.

(Translation):

Mr. Mariel: Mr. Chairman, before the first item of the estimates of the Department of Agriculture is carried, I would like to make, as briefly as possible, a few remarks on points of particular interest to my district. I will not repeat the arguments already advanced since the beginning of the discussion on the Department of Agriculture estimates; I will simply raise a few questions of particular concern to my area.

I want to refer the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hamilton) to the correspondence exchanged with his predecessor since the request I made here, in committee, at an earlier session, regarding the establishment of an experimental farm in northwestern Quebec.

This matter has been brought up regularly for many years—for over 20 years, I would say.

At one time, we had in our region, near Amos, in a locality known today as La Ferme, the beginning of an experimental farm. But one day, the federal Department of Agriculture decided to transfer quietly this farm to Kapuskasing, in northern Ontario.

Since then, farmers of my district have to go to northern Ontario, that is a distance of 300 miles, to get the results of the research and experiments that are carried on at the federal experimental farm of Kapuskasing.

It is generally recognized today in our region—the minister can readily confirm this with his officials—that the experimental farm which serves that part of the country and which is situated in Kapuskasing, Ontario, covers a very large territory between Hearst, Ontario, and Senneterre, Quebec. So, it covers a good part of the Chapeau constituency that I have the honour to represent in this house.

This territory is about 400 miles long in an east-west direction and 200 miles wide in a north-south direction. It is more than a territory; we could even say it is a province.

[Mr. Thomas.]

According to the information I could get from the people concerned and especially from the U.C.C. of the diocese of Amos, several requests have been made in this connection.

The U.C.C. has sent me a copy of a resolution that was passed at a meeting of delegates from 40 branches of the federation of the U.C.C. of the diocese of Amos, which reads as follows:

Because of our needs and further to the wishes repeatedly expressed at our recent conventions, the officials of the Amos U.C.C. federation urge you to do your utmost to establish in the northwestern part of Quebec an experimental farm that would meet our needs and would be situated in the centre of our region.

I have described the territory which is served by the Kapuskasing experimental farm. May I add that the farms of that region, of which there are about 11,000, are spread on an area of one and a quarter million acres and are occupied by northwestern Quebec farmers of my region. In fact, a great many of them live in my constituency.

This figure of 11,000 farms distributed over one million and a quarter acres is four times higher than that of the corresponding area of northwestern Ontario, where the Kapuskasing experimental farm is situated.

Furthermore, I should like to add that the rapid development of the mining industry will affect, in future, that of agriculture proper. In this connection, I should like to digress a moment to mention the forthcoming opening of new mining districts in the Mattagami lake area where, precisely, the federal government will build a railway line in the course of the next two years; thanks to that new territory, it will be possible to open up a new agricultural area in the immediate basin of the Allard river, about which a fine future is predicted from the agricultural standpoint, since it is one of the most promising agricultural districts not yet developed in our area; I would even say that it is one of the rare districts not yet developed in the province of Quebec where agricultural possibilities are immense.

So, with the development of the mining industry to the north, northeast and east of Abitibi, there is no doubt that agriculture will continue to progress in our area. This means that the most important agricultural part of our territory is in northwestern Quebec, at about 300 miles from Kapuskasing. That, you can imagine, presents some inconvenience