

*Rural Development*

**Mr. Sauvé:** So far there is no proposal which could be covered under Bill C-151, but under the general ARDA agreement there has been some discussion and I think one of these proposals have been accepted for certain regions in Quebec where there are Indians.

Clause agreed to.

On clause 5—*Comprehensive rural development program and special rural development area defined.*

**Mr. Thomas (Middlesex East):** I should like to have it clearly stated in this legislation that Indian reserves are covered by the bill. I have noted the minister's comments to the effect that in certain ARDA agreements signed between the federal government and the provinces Indian reserves have been included. Very well, if Indian reserves can be included, no harm will be done by spelling this out in the legislation. I therefore wish to move:

That clause 5 (b) be amended by inserting the words "or Indian reserve" after the word "area" in line 39 of page two thereof.

**Mr. Sauvé:** I do not think it is necessary for this amendment to be moved. I say this because in the present bill we are talking about areas, not about people. Rather, we are talking about people living in certain rural areas where there is a concentration of low income families. I do not think it is necessary to make a distinction between the Indian and the non-Indian population of such areas. I have already mentioned that in the Interlake special rural development programs the Indian population is covered.

**An hon. Member:** Not everywhere.

**Mr. Sauvé:** No, but they are covered in the Interlake region. There are other areas where sections of the Indian population would come within the scope of this program. As I said, the ARDA agreement has been modified so that a province may apply the program to Indian lands and Indian people.

I feel that by accepting this amendment we would, in a way, be appearing to make Indians a different group of people. In fact we are trying to consider the population of a rural area without making any such distinction. I think the amendment would add nothing. The hon. member can rest assured that among the problems we have in mind in certain rural areas are precisely those of certain areas where there are many Indian reserves—Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Alberta—

[**Mr. Watson (Châteauguay-Huntingdon-Laprairie).**]

**Mr. Nielsen:** And the Northwest Territories and the Yukon.

**Mr. Sauvé:** I do not think this amendment is the answer. We are trying to define an area rather than a group of people.

**Mr. Thomas (Middlesex West):** I thank the minister for his comments and explanation. In supporting the amendment may I point out that paragraph (b) seeks to define a rural development area and it says:

A special rural development area is a predominantly rural area—

My amendment seeks to add the words "or Indian reserve".

—that is designated in an agreement between the province and the minister—

● (7:10 p.m.)

And so on. I am thinking of the Indian reserve in my own constituency of Middlesex West. It is a special area within its own right and there could be no possibility of considering the area surrounding the Caradoc reserve as a depressed area because it is composed of some of the finest land in the whole of Canada. The area itself is clearly defined. It is the Indian reserve, and because it is a special area, owned by the band under the Crown, it must be dealt with in a special way. I do not see how it could be included in the larger area for the purposes of this bill.

Therefore I think there is good reason to include the words "or Indian reserve," and then if the Ontario government sees fit to do so, it can include this reserve in any over-all program it may have for the province. But it would not fit into any program for the surrounding area.

The Indian reserve needs drainage. The agriculture of that area needs organizing. The Indians themselves do not have the funds to drain the land. But if it could be brought under this bill as a special area coming under the auspices of the Ontario Department of Agriculture, then the federal and provincial governments could both contribute so that the brush and weeds might be cleared off the land, thus making it a source of pride not only to the Indians themselves but to the whole area. Including the words "or Indian reserve" would clear up any confusion or misunderstanding.

**Mr. Sauvé:** I think that by adding the words "or Indian reserve" you would be restricting the meaning of "a predominantly rural area." Evidently the Indian reserve is a rural area and we do not want to make any