

*Supply—Forestry and Rural Development*

and urban transportation difficulties. We already have tremendous problems in respect of pollution control. If it were possible for the government to combine its ARDA program with a more realistic agricultural price policy this would be advantageous to the rural residents of our country.

• (5:30 p.m.)

[Translation]

**Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix):** Mr. Chairman, I would also like to take a few minutes to have a voice from Quebec heard on this side of the house and to say a few words about the estimates of the Department of Forestry and Rural Development.

Before dealing with the matter at hand, I would like to endorse the tribute paid by the Minister of Forestry and Rural Development (Mr. Sauvé) to the deputy minister, Mr. Rousseau, who has just retired. I have had, for some time, the opportunity of working with him and I greatly appreciated his knowledge, his dedication and the work he accomplished within the department. I therefore join the minister in expressing my best wishes to him on the occasion of his retirement.

I want to thank the minister also for welcoming the farmers from Charlevoix who came to Ottawa last year to submit their grievance about the feed grain freight cost problem. The minister will recall that a discriminatory situation existed as far as the farmers of my constituency were concerned; they came to Ottawa to see him and he solved their problem in no time at all. I must tell the minister the farmers of my region are highly satisfied with his work, and I am sure that if he ever came to my constituency, he would get a tremendous welcome from them.

Mr. Chairman, this afternoon the minister defined for us the objectives of his Department of Forestry and Rural Development. Of course, the field of action of this department is rather restricted. As we all know, the main objective is research. He told us that his department had developed this field to the highest degree and that since its establishment, research work has become so highly valued that the provinces, as well as forestry organizations, consult our research experts to learn about developments in the field of forestry.

Of course, with the additional responsibility for rural development, the chief objective of the department of forestry agencies now is to administer the ARDA act.

[Mr. Schreyer.]

As you may recall, Mr. Chairman, when the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton), the minister of agriculture at that time, introduced this act in the house and piloted it through to its enactment in 1961, we all heard a sigh of relief from our rural communities. At last, it was said, the government has made a legislative effort to raise the depressed status of our rural class, which, as we know, often lived in disquieting grey areas.

On January 27, 1966 to be exact, when addressing the Canadian Forestry Association in Toronto, the minister defined how he understood ARDA and stated:

ARDA is based on the following concept: the fact that hundreds of thousands of rural people live in social and financial hardship is a discredit to our ability to bring about changes. The great objective of ARDA is to increase rural employment and income opportunities of the rural people, but not by resorting to unnecessary work programs, welfare assistance or subsidies.

The main objective of ARDA, as stated by the minister—I entirely agree with his definition of the aims and objectives of ARDA—is to create employment by bringing forward planned programs.

Of course, even if the minister persuades the federal government to vote \$300 million for programs which first are to be censored by the provinces, the powers of the minister are nevertheless severely restricted by the constitution since all he can do is sign agreements with the provinces and provide subsidies to the provinces for the implementation of programs under ARDA. The federal Minister of Forestry and Rural Development often finds himself in a false position. Naturally, one can argue that, under the constitution, the federal government has jurisdiction only over research in matters relating to forestry, but I think that this is such an important question that the provinces and the federal government will have to get together in order to define what comes under the federal and provincial jurisdiction in this field. I would be agreeable to the federal department of forestry having joint jurisdiction and responsibilities, just as agriculture shares its jurisdiction with the provinces. What is the point of the federal government making available to our provinces huge amounts for rural development if the provinces cannot afford to contribute to these programs? This is what happens most of the time. And this is why there are complaints that the provinces seem, from time to time, to indicate that they do not want to co-operate fully with the federal government