

Rural Development

by ARDA during the past several years indicate that problem of rural low income is general throughout many areas of Canada where the land, climate or marketing conditions are not especially favourable. The normal ARDA program, which includes research, land use adjustment and farm adjustment, rehabilitation and soil and water conservation, is well under way. We can foresee that the basic ARDA program, together with the many related programs pertaining to the manpower, education and the like, can with proper application prove adequate to meet the broad problem of rural low income over a number of years. However, it is obvious from the statistics and from the detailed studies carried out that many rural areas have economic, social and resource use problems of such magnitude that extraordinary measures will be required to solve them.

The fund for rural economic development is one of these extraordinary measures. It is designed as a special weapon to help deal with areas in which rural development requires a coherent and comprehensive approach. Let me describe in detail three examples of such areas in eastern Quebec, northern New Brunswick and the Interlake region of Manitoba.

Beginning with the Interlake area, we find a large area of about 12,000 square miles which is relatively thinly populated by 61,000 people. These are people of various ethnic backgrounds, mainly of northern and eastern Europe but include about 8,000 Indian and Metis. In the main the citizens of the Interlake area carry out mixed farming operations with some ranching and dairy farming. Some are occupied with the major inland fishery that exists on lake Winnipeg and adjacent lakes and others are engaged in producing gravel, gypsum and limestone.

Of the 3,346 farms in the area, only 8 per cent sold more than \$5,000 worth of products annually. About one-third of the farms sold between \$1,200 and \$2,500 worth of products annually and the remaining 40 per cent sold less than \$1,200 worth of products annually. These figures relate to the 1961 census.

A further 3,200 of the men of the region are employed as fishermen. During the fishing season of 1961 and 1962 they marketed a little more than \$3½ million worth of fish. The average gross income of these men was \$689.

● (3:50 p.m.)

From this information, it is easy to see that there is a relatively low average standard of living in this area. During the past several

[Mr. Sauvé.]

years the Manitoba government has carried out a very broad and comprehensive research program in the Interlake area, with the federal government paying 100 per cent of the cost through ARDA. This research program, which cost approximately \$400,000, provided detailed information on the natural resources of the area. Also, a great number of possible projects for development of the region were studied in detail, with a full analysis of the economics of possible development projects and with equal attention to the very important sociological problem of getting local people to participate in programs which might require changes of occupation or moves to other areas.

One might sum up the results of this research program by saying that it has revealed in detail economic and social problems of the Interlake area which are so acute that nothing short of a major, comprehensive program of development, and resource adjustment can hope to provide these 60,000 Canadian citizens with a decent opportunity for productive and satisfying lives. Anything less than this would be unable to bring this region any significant degree of economic vitality and social improvement. It is like some of the modern antibiotics; too small a dose merely cures the symptoms of the disease for a time, after which it emerges more violently than before.

We expect that the government of Manitoba will request participation in the fund for rural economic development to help finance the major program they are planning for development of the Interlake area. We do not yet know the details of their development program, but we expect that it will provide for basic improvements in primary and secondary education, adult education and technical training, further development of the transportation system, resource adjustment programs, resource development programs and measures to stimulate business and industry. I can assure hon. members that such brief statements relative to a regional development program have tremendous implications when they are being translated from words to action. For example, the Manitoba government has already organized seven or eight area development boards in the Interlake area in order to enable local people to participate in the studies and in the planning. Educational groups have been organized to bring adequate knowledge of present and future programs to the people who will be affected by the programs.