

Rural Development

I say that when the five years have passed by \$100 million will be appropriated for the next five years and more land will be purchased.

As can be seen in the Canada Year Book, the percentage of land owned by farmers in Canada has increased from what it was in the 20's and 30's. In other words today most farmers are farming land they own; a far greater percentage are farming land they own than was the case in the 20's and 30's. Will that trend continue if we pass this legislation and endorse it wholeheartedly? As I said before, it is my experience in this house that once legislation is on the statute books the money involved rarely diminishes. We have \$50 million appropriated today; five years from now it will be \$100 million and later another \$100 million. More money is appropriated because more pockets of poverty exist, and away we go. Maybe nobody really knows where it ends.

I hope that when this piece of legislation passes the minister responsible for ARDA will not let it take up all of his time or all the time and energy of the department. I hope he will continue the original intention of ARDA to find pockets or areas in Canada where vast resources remain undeveloped. The whole central part of Alberta might well be said to be rich in soil containing the most valuable resources in Canada. However, it is also very weak in the development of that soil because today it has a very sparse population per square mile. In other words, we have a vast potential which could be developed under ARDA, and many other areas in Canada could also be developed. Resources could be developed so that intensification of population could be achieved rather than go into areas where income is low and take the people off the farms and move them into cities. Let us take the low income people in the cities, many of whom desire to go back to farming, and develop the agricultural land throughout Canada. In many cases those in the low income group in the cities desire to go back into agriculture and they should be given an opportunity to do so.

It is a popular belief, inspired by many newspaper articles on agriculture, that the small farmer must go. Every professor in every university will say that the small farmer must go. In many cases the small farmer does not want to go; he wants to remain a small farmer because he likes farming. He does not want the burden of debt. He does not want financial worries; he only wants to

remain on his farm and earn his living. In the Kootenays, in Acadia, in Quebec or in any other part of Canada we must give him the right to remain small if he so desires. We cannot suddenly say to him through government legislation: You are uneconomic and because your neighbour wants to sell you must sell; we will force you to take up another line of occupation and move elsewhere. We in this country who share his freedom must guard against the ever-expanding system of state farms which this legislation may well bring about.

• (5:20 p.m.)

(Translation)

Mr. Gaston Clermont (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, I had expressed my intention to make a contribution to the debate on Bill C-151, which I strongly support, but so as not to delay its passage, I shall summarize my remarks in one or two minutes.

Yesterday, the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Sauv ), who is responsible for rural development, mentioned the purposes of this new legislation in his very detailed statement. He said among other things, that three areas, one in Manitoba, one in eastern Quebec and one in New Brunswick, would benefit from this new legislation which, with ARDA, will step up the war against poverty in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, I take the liberty of adding another area, that of western Quebec, it could adjust very well to this new legislation. I refer to the Rouge river valley, of which the department has had a study made by a company directly concerned with rural development. Its 2,000-page report covers that 2,500 square mile area which has a population of 25,000 and includes 31 municipalities.

Here, I also want to mention the Little Nation valley, the Li vre valley and the Gatineau valley.

Another preliminary report in the hands of ARDA was prepared by the Canadian Welfare Council concerning poverty in rural areas and deals with three provincial counties, Papineau, Gatineau and Pontiac.

I would have liked to add further remarks in this regard for the regions I have just mentioned, but I think the Minister of Forestry could use the power conferred upon him by section 4 of Bill C-152 to make a study.

Therefore, I suggest to him, Mr. Speaker, that he make a study of the four western Quebec valleys I have mentioned, with a