

Supply—Agriculture

the first name. For what reason was he replaced, and who recommended Mr. Lamoureux for such a position?

Mr. Hays: I cannot reply at the moment, but I will have an answer for the hon. member in a few minutes.

In reply to the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, may I say that we will get a copy of the instructions that went out. These instructions, of course, went out to all people of our department. So far as I am concerned, they were to the effect that all automobile dealers were to be asked to tender for vehicles. This is the information I have at the moment, but I will probably have a copy of the instructions within the next few minutes.

Mr. Cardiff: May I ask the minister to tell me how many lawyers for the Farm Credit Corporation in the county of Huron have been changed since his government took office?

Mr. Hays: I cannot give the exact number, but I will be glad to look it up. I believe this information was given to the house a few weeks ago when the names of all lawyers right across Canada were tabled.

[Translation]

Mr. Choquette: Mr. Chairman, to continue the remarks I started last week when we were considering the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, I am pleased to point out that the riding of Lotbinière I have the honour to represent is basically agricultural and typically rural. I am proud to take this opportunity to speak on behalf of the farmers of my riding.

The federal riding of Lotbinière includes the provincial county of the same name and several parishes of the provincial riding of Nicolet which are well known to my hon. friend for Nicolet-Yamaska (Mr. Vincent). By its essentially rural and agricultural character, the district of Lotbinière-Nicolet-Yamaska is a typical area of the province of Quebec. Mr. Chairman, certain parishes of my riding are very prosperous but others are faced with very serious economic difficulties. For instance, out of a total number of 2,571 farms, 1,869 are economical and 702 are marginal.

According to the definition given at the time of the 1961 census, an economical farm is one which provides an income of at least \$1,200.

Mr. Chairman, there are 1,869 economical farms in the county of Lotbinière and 1,100 of them bring a gross income of less than

\$2,500. That is indicative of the alarming situation of farmers in Quebec, and in Lotbinière in particular, because, as everybody knows, \$2,500 or less is a very small gross income indeed, considering the heavy responsibilities of farmers.

Farm mechanization and farm maintenance entail quite heavy expenditures. In addition, farm credit charges and all other charges farmers must meet require a much higher income than what they are receiving now.

That is why, Mr. Chairman, I think that, as I pointed out earlier, it would be better if, instead of accusing our hon. friends opposite, the Conservatives, of having shown negligence, incompetence and inertia, while they in turn examine the statistical data of 1963-64, to compare them with figures of the previous years, and then tell us that the present government has also shown itself to be negligent in the performance of its duties, it would be better if, with one accord, in harmony, we were to consider objectively the farm problems in the province of Quebec, because it is becoming more and more crucial.

Mr. Chairman, during the past several years, thousands of farms have been abandoned. I think that, from 1931 to 1961, more than three million acres of land have been abandoned. The rural population has been reduced by many thousands, which explains the certain lack of interest we have now towards agriculture. Today more than ever, it is important to restore farm land and agriculture, because our young people especially seem no longer interested in those areas and farming can no longer attract them at all. And that is precisely because of the very low income the farmers are receiving.

It seems obvious, Mr. Chairman, that the present government could model itself on the pattern of the provincial government of Quebec, which has appointed a committee, a member of which is the deputy minister of agriculture, Mr. Chagnon, who is well known for his ability and experience, to study the marketing of farm products.

Mr. Chairman, that committee applied itself to inventory the total farm resources of the province of Quebec and to determine to what extent they could be marketed, because the problem facing Quebec agriculture is one of productivity and marketing.

It is known that the province of Quebec is unable to produce enough pork, beef, lamb, potatoes or tomatoes to meet the needs of its own consumers. Therefore, if our farmers were given a better leadership, if they had an appropriate stimulant resulting from a dynamic policy, they could increase