

Supply—Forestry and Rural Development

taken and the decisions which they suggest to improve the application of that important legislation.

The department is also responsible for the administration of the Maritime Marshland Rehabilitation Act, which has a very limited scope and which will expire in 1970, since the provinces concerned, that is New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, will then assume all the administrative responsibilities provided by the act.

This was a short overall view of the department's activities.

In the presence of two of my predecessors at the head of this department, may I pay a very special tribute to Mr. Rousseau, the deputy minister who retired on September 1 of this year. Mr. Rousseau, whom you know very well, was not only a forester, a scientist, but also a humanist. I think that my colleagues who have worked with him have been able to appreciate in particular his talents, his kindness and his understanding of problems.

Under his leadership, the department has adopted a course which I am sure it will pursue, and my colleagues in the house will certainly wish to join me in paying tribute to this great servant of the state.

Mr. Rousseau has been replaced as deputy minister by the vice-president of the Economic Council, Mr. Couillard, who took up his duties on September 1. There is no need to describe Mr. Couillard here—he is well known, having served on the Economic Council of Canada since its creation. He has had a career in the civil service, and he is known for his administrative ability.

We have also lost this year to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources the assistant deputy minister responsible for ARDA, Mr. Davidson. He has become head of the water resources division of that department. Mr. Davidson, whom several hon. members know, has left his mark on the administration of ARDA and I was very sorry to see him leave.

He was replaced by Mr. Saumier whom most of the committee members have met and who has shown a remarkable understanding of ARDA problems. It is pointed out in the committee report in which a special tribute is paid him.

During the year, the Minister of Public Works (Mr. McIlraith) announced that the headquarters of the department and the research laboratory would be built one in Hull and the other in Lucerne. These buildings

[Mr. Sauvé.]

the plans and specifications of which must be submitted, will start soon I suppose. That is almost a new departure for the federal government to try to build on the Quebec side a certain number of federal buildings and I suppose this is preliminary to the establishment of a true national capital.

There, dear colleagues, you have the essence of what I wanted to say to you. I hope to be able this afternoon to answer all your questions. I know that you too believe in the work of the department and that you are most interested in the ARDA program and in the regional development program.

I will accept the criticisms you will make in the same spirit as I have in my remarks, that it to say that I hope they will help to improve the work of the department.

[*English*]

Mr. Hamilton: I think it is fitting to say at the outset that the members of the opposition taking part in the committee hearings were relatively pleased by the efforts the minister and his officials made to answer their questions in connection with both forestry and rural development. Nevertheless I must say with equal frankness that there is grave disquiet not only among members of the committee but among farmers, certain of the farm leaders and some of the newsmen who have taken a constructive interest in ARDA over the years. They keep asking me: What has gone wrong; why have the expectations of this legislation not been achieved?

Listening to the minister speaking today, I realized he was telling us that progress is being made but that certain limitations were hindering the success of what in theory is sound legislation. I gathered from what he told us that in his view those limitations were, first of all, those imposed by the terms of the British North America Act. In the second place they arose because the federal government could take no initiative in proposing programs and, third, because of the fact that the federal government was obliged to carry out its work in co-operation with the provinces.

The suggestion was made, though it was not expressed directly, that there is a great variety in the ability to understand the purposes and techniques of this legislation, though such understanding is of great importance.

If this is a fair assessment, I think I should spend the few minutes available to me in this debate by making a further attempt to reach