

*Rural Development*

to the North Shore and the Lower St. Lawrence may benefit our two areas and contribute to their development.

• (8:30 p.m.)

I also wish to congratulate the minister on the introduction of his bill, on his dynamic administration of his department and on his often expressed desire to co-operate with the provinces and the public bodies which concern themselves with the problems of the development of designated areas in particular. Several members were jealous of our selection as a pilot area because there is also poverty in their regions. It must surely be the first time that poverty is to be envied. I believe there are two reasons—there is no cause for an area to congratulate itself on its selection as a pilot area. First, the main characteristic of those regions was a high level of unemployment, a low level of income and general poverty.

Another reason why we can be proud to have been chosen as a pilot area is that in the Lower St. Lawrence region, we did not merely throw the blame on others and weep over our sorrows, but we tried to take our future in hand and organize ourselves for the necessary work of rehabilitating our region and of getting the help of competent authorities.

Indeed, in 1956, the former Secretary of State, now member for Outremont-Saint-Jean (Mr. Lamontagne), in a speech made at Mont Joli, introduced the idea of an Economic Council in our region which would unite our efforts and work toward our economic development. His message was to be heard by the chambers of commerce and the municipal councils which, as early as in 1956, grouped Rivière-du-Loup, Témiscouata, Rimouski, Matapédia and Matane through an economic council whose goal was to unite all men of goodwill in the region to promote the development of its human resources so as to ensure true and lasting prosperity and to represent them before governments and higher economic organizations with regard to regional questions.

Thus we became a group and the municipalities paid 10 cents a head while the county councils contributed 5 cents a head to the establishment of an Economic Council with a permanent secretariat to help with economic surveys throughout the region. We began by assessing our main strength, our population.

[Mr. Gendron.]

We had done a study on transportation, on agriculture, and we necessarily became aware that we did not have the financial facilities to develop more fully and adequately the complex program of studying a vast territory with many complex problems.

However, that work drew the attention of government authorities and we became the first pilot area in Canada under ARDA, with special studies projected and also I hope special subsidies.

The Economic Planning Board gave birth to the Eastern Quebec Development Board and brought together many experts of different schools of thought who, for three years, have been making studies of the territory. The E.Q.D.B. decided to undertake a general study of the territory instead of specific projects, and also encouraged the people to participate in that work. Undoubtedly, much could be said on the whole question of development and the new duties of whoever would undertake it with regard to his relations with the people and his future projects.

Suffice it to say that, to my mind, developers are architects who draw up plans for the land of the local people who are its first owners and who must therefore keep the initiative and the final decision which, is recognized as that of any owner with respect to an architect.

Social incentive may have a double purpose, that of inviting the population to understand the rules of the art of development as well as the purpose of translating the aspirations of the proprietor, of the local people. I dare hope that, at the conclusion of those studies which are to be made during the summer, there will have been a full understanding of this double mission, on the one hand, of the architect who must not only have planned his development, but also have considered all the aspirations of the local people and that the latter on the other hand, will realize the considerable risk in brushing aside all the studies and in thinking that planning or development can be done simply as chance directs or by improvisation.

I think both elements are essential and must play their part and that people in office, members of parliament and others, really do their share and take part with development experts in the preparation of a program which might possibly bring about a real development of the area. We hope for a great deal from the preparation of this plan and we