

*Supply—Agriculture*

the hon. member for Essex East, who made his contribution in the debate a little while ago. I should be glad to arrange a seminar with him if he is interested in these pamphlets.

We in the Peace river country have a particular interest in this matter. We have been largely and primarily an agricultural district which is now in the process of transition to one with secondary industries. Just recently we held in the city of Grande Prairie a northwest resources conference which dealt in large measure with agriculture and the bringing into an agricultural area of secondary industries. We had present some well-known figures, including Mr. J. E. Brownlee, whom I regard as one of our leading statesmen of agriculture, and Dean Bentley of the faculty of agriculture of the University of Alberta.

This particular aspect of research, as indicated in correspondence and in the pamphlets from the United States department of agriculture, has a great future as far as we in Canada are concerned. I was most gratified to observe that our Department of Agriculture, under the guidance of the present minister, had commenced research into this problem, and the United States people mentioned the communications and the contacts they had with the minister and his department.

I am going to refer just briefly to one pamphlet which I received from the United States department with regard to what they consider to be the beneficial effects of this program of rural redevelopment. I am now referring to a pamphlet entitled "Committee for Rural Development Program" under date of January 21, 1960, issued in Washington. It is an answer to the question "What happens when industry moves to the country?" and it gives the effect of the analysis and studies which have been made of this program as it affects a number of states in the United States. The pamphlet reads in part as follows:

States included are Louisiana, Mississippi, Iowa, Utah, and Ohio. In these five states, studies in selected rural areas with new industrial plants have turned up some significant findings... For example:

Rural people who obtain jobs in the new factories moving into their area are much younger than average residents of employable age. The average factory worker in the areas under study is about 30 years old. This compares with an average of 50 years for heads of farm families in the same area. Industry also increases the income of many rural people... The living standard of those who find jobs in the new plants has gone up at a faster rate than that of other rural residents. Incomes of plant workers equal, and in many cases exceed, incomes of average families in the same community.

Plant workers were found to be among the leaders in rural community organizations and

groups... Rural residents who find jobs in local industry continue to take an active part in community and religious affairs, the studies indicate.

About one in four plant workers in areas studied operate farms.

Their farms are usually smaller than the average in the community.

Farmers usually reduce their operations after taking an industry job. Farmers working in plants studied had reduced the number of days they farmed as much as 50 per cent,...

Just to sum up, may I say that I think here is an excellent example of a blending together of all that is best in the agricultural way of life with those benefits which come from mingling with some other form of industrial activity. I am glad to see the interest which our department is taking in the matter. I feel that if this research is pressed it will result in at least some alleviation of the situation which affects agriculture today; a situation in which, in some cases unfortunately, efficient farmers, through no fault of their own, may well be compelled to give up their holdings and move into larger urban centres in order to take industrial employment for which they have no particular training, with a consequent increase in the seasonal type of unemployment. I think the incentive of this program is one very much to be desired, and it is one which I commend to the minister.

At one o'clock the committee took recess.

**AFTER RECESS**

The committee resumed at 2.30 p.m.

**Mr. Harkness:** Mr. Chairman, immediately before the luncheon recess the hon. member for Peace River had been speaking of the rural redevelopment program in the United States. I am extremely glad to hear of his interest in this subject. It is one which I hope will be shared to a constantly increasing extent by all hon. members of the house.

I do not think we can over-emphasize the importance of the introduction of a rural redevelopment scheme in Canada. We have been working on this now for the last year and a half to two years and we hope to be in a position sometime before the end of this year to be able to make some definite proposals as far as instituting a rural development scheme in Canada which would be adapted to Canadian conditions. Hon. members are probably aware that a group of economists and agriculturists from the department made quite an extensive trip down to the United States to observe their rural redevelopment program and to study it during last year and, as I say, we are now actively working on a program of our own.