

unhappy to see ARDA held up as an example of this phenomenon at work.

● (5:20 p.m.)

There are program directors and special project directors and, according to the departmental news releases, it has been found necessary to hire program co-ordinators, fund co-ordinators and special program co-ordinators, some of whom no doubt do important work. Is the minister satisfied that he is on top of the situation, and is he satisfied that ARDA is not becoming too profuse and that the administrative arrangements or appointments are not becoming excessive, in relation to the amount of work that is actually being done in the field? I agree that there is not too much one can quarrel with about the concept of ARDA, but I think these questions should be answered.

I have a farm information news letter dated July of this year which is devoted entirely to an explanation of what is being done under ARDA in terms of land use, adjustment and farm enlargement programs. It states clearly that one of the functions of ARDA is to assist farming operations to increase the amount of land per farm. Presumably what is meant is that by making grants available and by providing technical assistance in respect of land use it will be possible for farm operators to increase the amount of arable land. This may be done by leasing property now in right of the federal government or the provinces. No doubt this is being done in many provinces. In my province, while there has been some improvement in the interlake area, in almost every other part of the province where there is available crown land which could be put to use for agricultural production, particularly in the southern part, it is almost impossible to get any action or any commitment as to a timetable for study of land use possibilities, drainage programs or control efforts. These must be carried out before these lands can be leased as community pastures or on any other basis, to increase agricultural production.

Yesterday I listened very closely to the speech of the hon. member for St. John's West. He attempted to repudiate the statements of the hon. member for Brandon-Souris, whose remarks related to whether this government was doing anything concrete or tangible in the way of resources development. The hon. member for St. John's West referred to ARDA and FRED. I should like to quote one or two sentences of what was said by that Liberal member as recorded at page

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3446 of *Hansard* for October 24. Referring to the hon. member for Brandon-Souris and what he said about ARDA, he is reported as saying:

The hon. gentleman has asked for an example. He has only to go to his own province of Manitoba to get an example of the working of this program, and I refer of course to the recently signed agreement.

He was referring to the recently signed special interlake area ARDA agreement. The terms of that agreement and the planning that took place before its signing are something no one can quarrel about, but after the passage of five years under the general ARDA program and more than two years under the special interlake area program there is still no evidence of the fact that the government has grappled with the problem of low farm income. That is what this program originally intended. There is no evidence of any kind in relation to work in this field, or in the field of improved land productivity. In the interlake area under the terms of the special agreement a great deal of money will be spent on educational facilities—the construction of schools and technical institutes. I do not quarrel with these expenditures but I do wonder whether the whole concept behind ARDA is being changed. If it is being changed we should be informed about the change. I was always under the impression that this program was intended to improve agricultural productivity in relation to the re-allocation of farm land use from grain to beef production or vice-versa. We seem to be digressing, perhaps logically so, but if we are we should be told what this administration thinks in respect of the work of ARDA.

It is my hope that the minister will have an opportunity this afternoon to reply to some of the points put forward. I still maintain that the main problem in our agricultural interests relates to the cost-price relationship. If ARDA is to be successful, and in some provinces there is no evidence that it is, it will be successful only in a peripheral fashion in relation to low farm income and rural poverty. It may be that some good will be accomplished by decentralization of industry. New industry located in rural areas will allow marginal farm operations to make the transition from farming to industry. However, like the hon. member for Qu'Appelle and others who have spoken, I do not like this trend stimulated by any artificial action on the part of the government. We already have a dramatic proliferation of urban problems