

undertake certain types of programs and the federal government may not take the initiative of proposing to them what type of programs they should undertake and develop, so that, in some provinces, certain aspects of the ARDA agreements have been emphasized more than the others. In fact, the programs provided for in the agreements with the provinces have been implemented, in most cases, very successfully and sometimes in spite of lots of red tape. Unfortunately the results have not always been most satisfactory. I am not surprised at that and I believe that most members will realize that such a complicated legislation as that of ARDA, which tackles almost all the rural problems, cannot always be interpreted or implemented as firmly as we would like.

But it is not because in some cases—and I expect a few members of this house to mention one case or another this afternoon—administrative weaknesses or wrong interpretations of the agreements have occurred, that we should come to the conclusion that the program has not been successful. On the contrary, the ARDA program—passed without dissent by both houses in 1961, when the portfolio of agriculture was held by the present member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton)—has received the widest acclaim, because it symbolizes perhaps a new concept in federal-provincial relations, where each province and the federal government are partners in a project affecting a definite part of the population, namely those living in rural areas.

On the whole, I think we have made some progress. As you know, the act was amended last year, by the addition of the Fund for Rural Economic Development Act, which made the sum of \$300 million available to the department. It is now possible to get to the root of the rural problems.

However, we cannot do everything by ourselves. Until such time as a national agricultural policy is developed, that is, until the federal and provincial governments, in cooperation with farmers' agencies, agree upon a number of targets to be attained in the agricultural field within 5 or 10 years, ARDA will not fulfill its purpose as effectively as it should, and though we have the right to step in the fact remains that a number of requirements over which the ARDA administration has no control, have to be met.

In order to help us carry on our work, we have established, as hon. members will remember, the Canadian Council on Rural Development. It is a rather unusual organization in that it is not under the direct control

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of the minister or the department. It has its own budget, its secretary, and even though its members are appointed by the minister, they act independently, that is, they meet regularly; they make comments, hold discussions, and they criticize the work of ARDA, in a constructive manner, of course, but they are not bound by the minister's decisions.

This is a federal organization of a new type which, I believe, performs its duty effectively. It will soon be called upon to assume other responsibilities, since it has given satisfaction up to now.

Certain members will possibly want to know what is happening to the development program suggested by the eastern Quebec development board and which was turned over to the provincial and the federal governments in July 1966.

It will be recalled that several times last year and this year, I spoke of the federal government's concern with the implementation of this development project which seems most important to me and at Rivière-du-Loup, at Chandler or at Rivière-au-Renard, last month, I undertook, on behalf of the government, to carry out this project. I have the pleasure to announce that last week, I received a letter from the acting premier and finance minister (Mr. Dozois) saying that he wanted to proceed immediately with the practical and definite negotiation of an agreement to implement this development program.

That is very good news which will surely please everyone interested in the pilot area because the implementation of this large development program is awaited impatiently.

● (3:30 p.m.)

In addition to forestry and ARDA, I am also responsible for the Canadian Livestock Feed Board created under legislation passed last year.

The president and the senior members of that board took up their duties on May 12 last, that is a few months ago; they have since considered several problems arising from the administration of that legislation whose object, as you know, is to provide for the transportation costs of livestock feed from the great lakes to the eastern provinces of Canada. They have already reached a certain number of decisions which I announced in the house last week and which are proof of their competence.

They are also reviewing the over-all problem and I hope that in the near future I will be in a position to communicate to the members of the house the stand which they have