AGRICULTURAL RENEWAL IN ONTARIO

A $40,000 programme, the first phase in the conversion of sub-marginal farmland to forest use in the Grey and Bruce Counties of Ontario, is one of four new projects to be undertaken in the province under the terms of the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act. The other new ARDA projects are a study of the feasibility of cranberry production in the Muskoka and Parry Sound districts, a study of the potential for roughland pasture in Southern and South Central Ontario and the establishment of public hunting and wildlife-management areas in the Sauble Valley, Bruce County. The total cost of these four projects is estimated at $94,440, of which the Federal Government's share is $40,220.

CONVERSION OF POOR LAND

In connection with the first project, the Saugeen River Conservation Authority has had a long-term programme of acquiring sub-marginal agricultural lands within its watershed that are managed and developed for forestry and wildlife purposes. With ARDA financial assistance, which will lower the municipal cost-sharing from 50 to 25 per cent, this programme will be accelerated. Reforestation of the land will make it more productive and will sustain and improve water, wildlife and scenic resources.

NEW CRANBERRY CROP SOUGHT

In the Muskoka and Parry Sound districts, a $26,000 study will be carried out by the Horticulture Department of the Ontario Agricultural College to determine if a commercial cranberry crop on the acid bog soils of the region would be economically sound. The study will determine the amount of capital needed to establish a cranberry crop and which cranberry varieties are most suitable for the area, and will review cultural and management practices. A ready market is available if the numerous bogs of this region can support commercial crops, as Ontario imports about $500,000 worth of cranberries every year.

In another project, to cost $16,000, a large wetland area will be acquired and developed for public hunting, and will be managed by the Sauble Valley Conservation Authority. The project also includes measures to keep water levels more stable for agriculture and flood-control purposes.

CREATION OF NEW PASTURES

An ARDA research project, begun in 1963, on the production potential for pasture of roughlands too stony for cultivation, will be continued in 1964 at a cost of $12,000. It is estimated that there are about 2,500,000 acres of such land in Southern Ontario which were once cleared for agriculture but are not now suitable for cultivated crops. The use of new herbicides, the introduction of birdsfoot trefoil as a forage plant, and the use of suitable fertilizers may result in profitable pastures on rough, shallow or stony land. Cost and yield studies are necessary to determine if such soils should be used for pasture or whether other uses, such as reforestation, are preferable.

ICE-BREAKER FOR COAST GUARD

A contract amounting to nearly $19 million, for construction of a triple-screw ice-breaker for the Canadian Coast Guard, has been awarded to Canadian Vickers Limited, Montreal, it was announced recently by Transport Minister Pickersgill. The ship will be the most powerful conventionally-powered ice-breaker in the world. It will be for service in Arctic and Eastern Canadian waters. Delivery is scheduled for the autumn of 1967.

The design was produced to requirements established by the Department of Transport's Shipbuilding Branch, Lloyd's Register of Shipping, and the Canadian Board of Steamship inspection. The vessel will be powered by a steam turbo-electric propulsion system. It will have a flight deck aft for helicopter operations and two helicopters will be housed in a hangar between decks, with an elevator to raise them to the flight deck. The crew will total 122 officers and men.

LIVING AND WORKING FACILITIES

The ice-breaker will have continuous main and lower decks, with midship superstructure housing personnel accommodation. In addition, there will be hospital facilities, and provision will be made for the working requirements for oceanographic, hydrographic and related scientific undertakings that will be carried out on board. There will be a hydrographer's office and chart room, an oceanographic laboratory and winch and a bathythermographic winch aft.

The steering gear will be electric-hydraulic, with emergency power steering available. An all-electric control system will permit the ship to be steered from the crow's nest and wheelhouse top, in addition to the wheelhouse.

The ship will be fitted with the most modern electronic aids to navigation and communications equipment. It will have ample dry-cargo hold space, refrigerated cargo accommodation and cargo-handling equipment. The latter will include two 40-ton heavy-lift booms. Two 50-foot landing craft will be carried.

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RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION

Starts on the construction of new dwellings in urban and rural areas in Canada in the first quarter of the year numbered 23,297 units, a sharp rise from last year's first-quarter total of 17,091, while completions in these areas advanced substantially (76.9 per cent) to 44,385 units from 25,093 a year ago. Units in various stages of construction at March 31 totalled 73,495, a rise of 6.7 per cent from the corresponding total of 68,903 units a year earlier.

Starts in centres of 5,000 population and over numbered 5,525 in March, placing the January-March total at 19,853 units, up by 39.4 per cent from 1963's first-quarter total of 14,239. The month's completions in these centres numbered 21,996 units, putting the three-month total at 36,263, substantially (84.1 per cent) above the figure of 19,695 units for a year earlier. Units under construction in these centres at March 31 aggregated 62,535 units, a rise of 13.9 per cent from 54,890 units a year ago.