

*Rural Development*

authority in the matter. This measure being of federal inspiration, it should be directed, generally and efficiently, by the federal government.

I have been prompted to bring up the matter by an article published in *Le Devoir* on June 7, 1964, in which the Quebec minister of agriculture blamed the Minister of Forestry for doing something which, it seems to me the responsible federal minister should not be blamed. In his criticism, Mr. Courcy is reported by the June 7, 1964 *Le Devoir* as saying:

Consequently, if Quebec, continued Mr. Courcy, considers it untimely and impossible to implement immediately a research program on rural development, it certainly does not behoove the present Minister of Forestry, Hon. Maurice Sauvé, to comment publicly on Quebec's decision, and to thus intrude in our affairs.

I feel it would be advantageous to delineate clearly what jurisdiction falls to each of the two administrations, so that discussions and misunderstandings such as the one I have just reported may not recur in the future.

There is also, in this legislation, a section providing for the setting up of an advisory board. On reading this section, it becomes obvious that only ministers or public servants of the federal government will be called upon to hold office on this advisory board.

It seems to me it would be wise to take advantage of the knowledge of representatives of the agricultural people and to secure their assistance in a successful war against rural poverty, in the province of Quebec as well as in the other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, for 50 years now there has been a continuous decline in the importance of the agricultural contribution to the general economy of the province of Quebec.

During those 50 years, farm labour decreased proportionately from 30 to 10 per cent of the total labour force.

In 1957, agriculture in Quebec, for instance, produced 5.4 per cent of the net product. In 1951, 230,000 Canadians earned a living in agriculture, roughly 16 per cent of the total national labour force. In 1961, the number of farm workers had slumped to 142,000, that is approximately 8 per cent of the total Canadian labour force. From 1939 to 1960, in spite of the fact that farm labour decreased by about 50 per cent, the Canadian farmer had produced twice as much.

This means that agriculture in Canada is being completely transformed, and that it would be timely to give it all the attention

[Mr. Ricard.]

required, so that those talents that are indispensable to the success of agriculture in Quebec, as well as elsewhere in Canada, might not be lost.

It is a well known fact, Mr. Speaker, that country life has a tendency to make our young people shy away from the farm.

Our youth migrates increasingly to the towns. Of course, in the country, hours are longer and living conditions are more difficult than in the city; so, young people are discouraged by the fact that their parents cannot help them much to settle on farms.

Therefore, the credit given to the farming community, which is one of the best creditors one can find, should not be reduced but increased so as to allow young people to settle on farms, for if we let family farms disappear we will undoubtedly find ourselves in a difficult situation one day.

Farming, like any other profession, can be learned. It is learned more easily and more rationally in the company of one's parents, brothers and sisters. There will always be a place for family farms.

The trend today is towards larger farms and farming is considered as some sort of ever expanding business. But I am convinced there will always be room for the family farm. A man does not need a large farm to make a living for himself and his family.

I should like here to tell you of a personal experience which occurred in my riding. In the parish of Saint-Dominique, there is a strip of black soil which was practically untilled some 20 years ago. Every summer, drought fires would often start on this land, an easy prey to them, and thick, bitter smoke would rise, spreading even to the town of Saint-Hyacinthe.

Immigrants arrived in the country shortly after the war and bought these lands for ridiculously low prices. They worked them scientifically and made them so productive that those who sold them now wish they owned them.

Mr. Speaker, this is to show you that the important thing is not so much the size of the land as the intelligence and practical sense of the farmer who uses scientific methods to make his land productive.

Every day during the season there are dozens of workers in the parish harvesting the crops and sending on to the great centres the produce of these lands considered unproductive only a few years ago.