

Interim Supply

social and economic resources of the Torch river area, followed by two famous proposed studies which fitted very well in the ARDA program. Then came some wonderful projects in certain provinces, having to do with the establishment of new pastures.

Again through a press release, the minister announced a new pasture in Alberta for a sum of \$315,900, another in Saskatchewan covering over 35,000 acres, another community pasture of 19,200 acres, another one in Alberta at a cost of \$600,000, still another in Ontario at a cost of \$140,000.

Mr. Chairman, all this goes to show that, in the other provinces, the work of the federal and provincial governments was really aimed at implementing the ARDA program.

The same thing applies to drainage in the other provinces. If you refer to the minister's press release, you will see that he announced a drainage project, in Manitoba, at a cost of \$476,000.

Mr. Chairman, after this over-all review of those releases, let us see what has been done in Quebec.

The minister will probably reply that the government has transformed crown lands into blueberry fields. Since, as I say, that was done on crown land and not on farm land, as required under the ARDA program, it constitutes forest transformation rather than farm rehabilitation. It is not redevelopment of old bare farm land either.

It is not that I am against such clearing operations, that we may be sorry for in a few years, but I feel both governments took the bear by the tail. In my opinion, they have been concerning themselves with forest development instead of farm development.

If proper use had been made of ARDA, they would have started by rehabilitating existing farms which have always been marginal for lack of necessary governmental help.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, assistance should first have been provided to all farmers who own blueberry fields since, up until now, that is the only problem which has been tackled under ARDA in our district. Then, aid should have been given to those who have set up co-operatives for the rational growing of blueberries. After those two initial stages, it would have been time to set up the syndicates which have now been created for the production of those berries on a commercial scale.

Those syndicates are surely not farm organizations. In my district we call them patronage syndicates. Those are the organizations the minister has seen fit to subsidize.

What has been the result to date? Political protégés have succeeded in making from \$2,000 to \$3,000 in the space of a few days. What will be the outcome of all that? Surely not employment for the 8,700 families mentioned in the minister's press release of August 3, 1964, which reads as follows:

The federal Minister of Forestry, Mr. Maurice Sauvé, and the Quebec minister of agriculture and colonization, Mr. Alcide Courcy, announced jointly today... that an amount of \$140,000 will be spent for the implementation of an ARDA project whose purpose is to find which areas are suitable for the growing of blueberries. The federal government will pay half the cost of the project.

To this day, nine blueberry fields have been set up in Quebec under ARDA. The new project is to determine whether it would be advisable to develop additional fields of that kind to provide increased income and employment for over 8,700 families in the Abitibi and Lake St. John areas.

In my opinion, those figures were established, not by the minister, but by government officials, who have been rather generous, considering that the expenditure of \$135,000 for the setting up of a similar blueberry farm, not too far from my town, has provided employment for only 42 heads of families approximately, the rest of the money, that is \$102,000, going to small political protégés to pay for their machinery and for other political advantages in connection with those works.

It is for that reason I say that even if the minister were to set up 20 blueberry fields of that kind, it is not with such works that he will create jobs for 8,700 family heads.

I want to repeat that if millions had been used—true, a few millions were invested in those projects—but if first things had come first, that is, first of all try to improve what already exists—and what already exists is the family blueberry farm—I think it would have been a worthy achievement in my region and then, I think work would have been done within the framework of ARDA, because it would have been a direct assistance to the farmer.

After that stage, grants could have been made to the many blueberry co-operatives that farmers have set up as a result of painstaking efforts in our region. Today, when they would be ready to produce, those same farmers are being frustrated in their rights and cannot get any money from the two governments so as to improve existing blueberry farms.

But what happened? Millions were voted to set up syndicates, what are called blueberry syndicates, to break new ground in