

Ten years ago, the Federal Department of Agriculture established at Normandin, an experimental station which is making daily progress and which renders most valuable services to the district farmers.

But this region, whose fertile and productive lands were marked for agriculture, also had a great industrial future. Lake St. John covers 400 square miles, but through the many rivers which feed it, it drains a basin of 30,000 square miles. The lake is located at 310 feet above sea level and it empties into the Saguenay after two great falls, la Grande Décharge et la Chute à Caron, which are separated by a distance of about 15 miles. It is easy to understand what a potential of hydro-electric power Providence has seen fit to bestow upon this vast district. When one realizes that rivers such as the Péribonka, the Mistassini, the Ashuapmouchouan and the Métabetchouan run northward up to 150 miles and even up to more than 200 miles towards districts which are still fully timbered, it is easy to conceive that by controlling the flow of these rivers through the construction of reservoirs, of appropriate basins, it is possible to ensure at all times a steady level on Lake St. John and a constant flow at the great power-houses. In fact, it is now possible to store 400,000,000 cubic feet of water in the whole of the Lake St. John basin.

This gigantic task was first undertaken twenty-five years ago when the Grande Décharge dam was constructed, along with the power station at Ile Maligne, whose output is 540,000 h.p. Some years later, in 1931, a dam and power station were erected at Chute à Caron, with an output of 300,000 h.p. for use in the aluminum plant at Arvida. Finally, during the last war, from 1941 to 1943, the giant Shipshaw dam was erected. Its power station has a total output of 1,200,000 h.p., making it one of the engineering marvels of the age.

I might point out that some of these installations are situated in the neighbouring county, which is represented here by my good friend from Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon). It would hardly be in keeping with the liberal spirit to try and restrict to Lake St. John county the whole of this enormous industrial development. At all events, the two adjacent counties, Lake St. John-Roberval and Chicoutimi, form a single economic unit. Lumbering and metallurgical industries are to be found throughout the whole district, along with the hydro-electric plants which supply them with

[Mr. Dion.]

power. Agriculture and industry find themselves in a happy state of balance, which enables us to look to the future with confidence.

There is still great potential wealth in our county. On the rivers which flow into Lake St. John, innumerable waterfalls have not as yet been harnessed. The basins of these tributaries contain great reserves of timber. The mines of Chibougamou and Mistassini are still in the prospecting stage but already show great promise.

There is still another source of wealth that most of you know and that I have kept for dessert, that is, blueberries. This blue manna, with which we are blessed every summer, provides our people with revenue in excess of one million dollars. In 1945 this revenue reached 2½ million dollars.

The blueberry has grown to be the namesake of the population of Lake St. John, and we are proud of it. The blueberry is a handsome, firm and palatable fruit that brings substantial profits and would be popular on that score alone.

The blueberry crop is of more than local interest. Last year the international blueberries congress held in the district was attended by representatives from Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Washington and even Chicago, since the bulk of our crop goes to the United States market. I could dwell much longer on this palatable subject, but shall revert to it on some other occasion.

I should not want to close these few remarks on my district without a word about its chief and foremost asset, its population.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. DION: The hardihood and resourcefulness of the Charlevoix pioneers, together with the tenacity, tidiness and frugality of the early settlers of l'Islet and Kamouraska, have blended with other qualities found in all parts of the province of Quebec to form a sturdy population to which I am proud to pay tribute in this, my country's parliament.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. DION: Having in most cases no wealth other than their strength and courage, our early pioneers have been real builders in our part of the country. They have shown what the French race could do and can still accomplish when it keeps faith with its traditions and follows in the footsteps of its forefathers.