

Rural Development

During the two and a half year initial pilot period under the first federal-provincial general ARDA agreement, some 735 projects involving alternate uses of land, soil and water conservation, research and community development were put into effect. These involved a federal commitment of approximately \$35 million. Since the termination of the first general agreement nearly a year ago, the program has been continued and intensified under the federal-provincial rural development agreement.

There is reason, I believe, for great satisfaction in the way in which the ARDA program has developed. Many hundreds of worth-while projects have unquestionably improved the environment and circumstances of rural people, and many programs by other agencies, both public and private, have been modified in some degree because of ARDA to accommodate more closely to the realities of the modern rural situation. In short, ARDA has accomplished much both directly and indirectly.

However, it is now possible for ARDA to accomplish more. Many, perhaps most of the ARDA projects to date represent an intensification of alternate land use and farm adjustment programs which had been in effect previously. It is understandable that ARDA did not concentrate on more comprehensive projects because both the provinces and the federal government required time to do physical, social and economic research in considerable depth, to develop staff, to plan rural development programs and to establish ARDA within their system of priorities.

Certain facts have become apparent as the ARDA program progressed. First, it became obvious at a fairly early stage of the program that the problem of low incomes in rural Canada could not be solved within the agricultural sector alone. Even if all the low income farms could be enlarged, improved or consolidated, there would still remain a considerable problem of rural low income. Second, it became equally apparent that some rural regions were so hamstrung by poverty, lack of social capital and poor educational opportunity that no ordinary program of resource adjustment and rural manpower development could hope to greatly improve their situation in a reasonable time. It is this latter fact which impelled this government to take the special approaches which are implicit in the bill before the house today.

[Mr. Sauvé.]

• (3:40 p.m.)

Before discussing the more particular problems of the rural areas which are relevant to Bill C-151, I will refresh the memory of the hon. members by repeating certain statistics on poverty which were assembled by ARDA and published in various combinations during the past several years. Mr. Speaker, I have two pages of tables which I should like to have tabled, without reading them, by unanimous consent of the house.

Mr. Speaker: Does the minister simply wish to table these documents or is he requesting that they be printed as part of *Hansard*?

Mr. Sauvé: I should like to have them printed as part of the text of my speech, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is that agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

[*Editor's note: The tables referred to above are as follows:*]

Table I—Some Indicators of Rural Poverty in Canada by Province

Province	Percentage of Percentage	
	all farm families that have "low incomes" ⁽¹⁾	of rural non-farm families with annual income below \$3,000
Newfoundland	32	69
Prince Edward Island	36	58
Nova Scotia	32	53
New Brunswick	33	55
Atlantic Region	33	58
Quebec	29	48
Ontario	16	31
Manitoba	25	48
Saskatchewan	21	48
Alberta	19	39
British Columbia	15	29
Western Region	20	38
Canada	22	43

Absolute total for Canada	families 95,410	families 294,349
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⁽¹⁾ A "low income" farm family is one whose farm has a total capital value of less than \$25,000, gross sales of agricultural products of less than \$2,500 a year and off-farm work by the operator of less than 25 days a year.