

Supply—Forestry and Rural Development

falls under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces.

I think all will agree that the department is leading the way in all aspects of research. In fact, we receive every day tokens of appreciation and also many visitors who come to see our methods and work. Although we are restricted to scientific research in the field of forestry, we have nevertheless taken a number of initiatives, including that of convening the first national conference on forestry which took place in Montebello, in February 1966. All the members of this house received a report of this conference, and I know that several found the information it contained interesting.

Following this conference, there was a meeting of the committee which had been set up to organize the conference, and we agree that we could hold other meetings on a national level in which administrators, deputy ministers and high officials of the provincial governments would participate and consider together what measures the provincial governments could take to improve forest management.

I should like the hon. members to understand the role we play and the measures we are taking. We are able to do this because the provincial governments trust us to take certain very limited measures. There has been recently, as always, some criticism of the inaction of the department in the field of forest management. I do not have, any more than my predecessors, to explain continuously the limitations imposed upon us by the British North America Act with regard to our role in the field of resources, and I shall simply say that thanks to the very good relationship between the officials at the federal and provincial level, and also because of my personal relationship, as was the case for my predecessors, with the provincial ministers of forestry, we can still take certain initiatives which, although of an unofficial nature, have been very successful. I am also satisfied with the co-operation received at all times by the department from provincial and national organizations. And when steps were taken under the leadership of my predecessor to reorganize the department structure, we thought of developing a consultation system whereby all concerned, namely provincial governments, research institutes, universities or private enterprise, are represented. Since those advisory bodies have been set up in most parts of Canada, the results in our opinion have been very gratifying.

[Mr. Sauvé.]

• (3:20 p.m.)

I could speak at great length on the work performed in the department, but I think that most of my colleagues will dispense me from giving all these technical details which are very interesting indeed but which would extend the debate unduly.

The department of forestry, created in 1960 by the government under the leadership of the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) and whose first minister was the hon. member for Victoria-Carleton, was transformed in 1964 when the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) decided to add certain responsibilities in the fields of rural development and administration of transportation charges for livestock feed.

As far as rural development is concerned, what is known mostly under the name of ARDA, hon. members receive practically every day from the provinces or the federal government press releases which explain the work we are doing.

It is a member of this legislature who, in 1961, initiated that legislation—as I said previously when the department's budget was discussed or when amendments were made to the act—but allow me to recall very briefly that the legislation covering ARDA has changed considerably since then.

At first, it was thought that the legislation was concerned mostly with agriculture; then, as time went on, it was realized that it was impossible to solve farm and the rural problems solely with legislation on farming, that it was necessary to go further. The provinces and the federal government then directed their action toward the development of the physical and human resources in rural areas.

Finally, last year, a third step was taken when parliament approved the \$300 million Fund for Rural Economic Development, commonly known as FRED; its purpose is to enable the ARDA administration, jointly with the provinces, to engage in rural development.

Indeed, my colleagues are aware that since that time, since that act was passed by the house, we have signed agreements with two provinces, namely, New Brunswick and Manitoba; and we are currently negotiating vast rural development programs with Quebec, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland.

The administration of ARDA is no easy matter, because the act is based on agreements between the provincial and federal governments. Each province is free to