

tained. At the head of that commission, the Government put a most capable and highly appreciated business man and efficient administrator: the hon. S. N. Parent.

If this Government wish to obtain the results as pointed out in the motion introduced by the hon. member who has preceded me, they must do something more than talk about the development of our natural resources; they must act, devise and carry out a definite policy. In this like in any other policy, it is necessary that all the members of the Government be jointly liable and that they all agree to develop the resources of this country.

A conference was held recently in Buffalo by the International Commission and it is announced that on the 6th of April next another conference will be held in Washington to discuss the opportunity of building canals from Ottawa to the Great Lakes. I do not think that it is a purely federal matter. If other provinces want to establish water powers of 5,000 or 6,000 h.p., let them do what we have done in the province to which I belong, that is supply the companies with the necessary funds and bear the cost of the works.

I do not intend to dilate any further on the subject but let me say that I consider that it is the duty of this Government to adopt a clear cut policy. A single minister alone cannot be expected to deal with this matter; all the ministers, all the members of the Government should get together to promote the development of our natural resources.

Hon. S. F. TOLMIE (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the discussion of the flax industry by the hon. member for East Middlesex (Mr. Glass) and the hon. member for L'Islet (Mr. Fafard). I can assure them that the Government is keenly alive to the development of this valuable industry. At the present time, however, prices are extremely high—much higher than they were in 1914—and it is probable that there will be a certain amount of settling down when things begin to assume a normal condition. The Government, being seized with the importance of this industry, established at the Central Experimental Farm at Ottawa a mill for carrying on experiments in connection with the various processes connected with the preparation of flax for market. Ottawa was selected for the purpose because it was felt that the experiments could be kept more closely under the eye of the Depart-

[Mr. Fafard.]

ment of Agriculture and of the director of the Experimental Farms. In connection with this work they are carrying on experiments in retting, breaking, scutching and also de-seeding. All this has resulted in securing a great deal of important and valuable information in connection with the industry. Samples are secured from all over the Dominion with the result that they are getting an excellent idea of the quality of the product from the various provinces. After looking at the industry from all angles, and after listening to the very excellent address of the hon. member for East Middlesex, we must all be convinced of the very great possibilities of the flax growing industry. The principal flax growing districts in Ontario are those around London, Chatham, taking in the counties of Kent, Middlesex, Huron, Perth and Waterloo. I have been informed by those in close touch with the work that Ottawa is not a first class district for this purpose. In some years it produces an excellent quality of flax, but it is found that if the summers are very dry the plant does not reach perfection. Quebec gives great promise as a flax-producing province. At Chambly-Vercheres flax grows very well indeed, although some of the very best quality is produced at Gaspé. The Maritime Provinces are also producing first class flax. In British Columbia in the delta land of the Fraser River valley first class flax can be produced.

Experiments are being carried on by the Government in connection with the various mechanical appliances for dealing with this crop. Pulling machines have been experimented with for several years, and I am assured now by one of the most prominent officials in the department that an improved type of this machine is expected to be ready by next year which will perform this operation. In all parts of the world pulling is performed by hand, and consequently in a country such as ours, where the cost of labour is very high, it is a serious handicap to the production of flax in competition with those countries where labour is very cheap. I sincerely hope, therefore, that his expectations will not be disappointed.

Experimental work has also been carried on in connection with de-seeding machines. The principal trouble with the ordinary de-seeder has been that it to a certain extent injured the seed, interfering very greatly with its germinating properties. This has now been overcome to a considerable extent, and we are producing seed that is