

*Rural Development*

human resources ready and willing to take the risks and to work. The people have a reputation for great mental capacity, as the evidence concerning schools shows. They have the reputation for being hard workers. But above all they have the reputation for having a moral fibre unmatched in any other part of the world. When you go through the spectrum from the extreme case at one end to cases at the other end not too difficult to rehabilitate, I suggest that in between there are many cases of need.

• (4:20 p.m.)

I have gone into this background in the hope that the remarks I am now going to make will be considered by the minister in a constructive fashion.

The first point I want to make has already been made to the minister by me in the house and it deals with the question of constitutional responsibility. Under the present constitution agriculture is a joint responsibility. The federal government can do anything it wants under the constitution in relation to agriculture in any province. The provincial government can do anything it wants within its own province. There is complete power for both governments to do anything they want.

However, when you begin to look at the needs of the people in these lower income areas you soon find you cannot redevelop these areas unless you use all of the resources such as the forests, the fish, industry and recreation, and these particular functions are outside the constitutional responsibility of the federal government. For half a century we have had to stand by and watch the relative lowering of incomes in these areas because of the excuse that the federal government had no responsibility in that field. In many cases the provinces felt that they did not have the financial capacity.

The great feature of ARDA, Mr. Speaker, was that we enabled every province without exception to agree that because of the great need of these people we could forget in this particular legislation any thought about the favourite tool of the partisan politician, which is quarrelling over the constitution. In this particular legislation there were no party differences. In this legislation there were no provincial rights or federal or centralized rights advocates. We were Canadians trying to help the people who needed help. If this concept is clearly in the mind of the minister, then I have no fear for the future. I think he

grasped the warning I gave him some months ago.

With regard to the activities of ARDA I have noticed that over and over again the minister has repeated that nothing will be done by the federal government unless they receive a recommendation from the province. I stated in the house that this practice was making him the most centralist minister the country had ever known. I did not make this accusation to bother the minister politically. I was simply pointing out that when you are working with the provinces and trying to solve problems which require the use of their sovereign fields of jurisdiction or those of the federal government, then you must have great flexibility.

For example, if the province of Quebec wants to take government action under this legislation—call it socialism if you like—then let them be; that is not our concern. Our task is to get the job done. If the province of Manitoba wants to use the uplifting force of private enterprise to achieve the same objective of raising income, then let them be.

In other words, what I was complaining about at that time was this. I know from long experience in dealing with organizations like Treasury Board, committees of cabinet and committees of civil servants that those bodies all try to put their own imprint on any proposed legislation. If any way can be found to delay a good program until every shoe lace has been tied they will find it, because they are the experts.

The minister will need to take a firm hand in administering the ARDA legislation to see that no group in Ottawa, be they advisory board, committee, Treasury Board or otherwise, breaks the minister's will to make certain that the job is done. That is the first point I want to raise.

My second point is very important and must be raised now. It is becoming very clear to me, as the federal government now moves from the stage where it provides money to carry out planning operations for 2,000 projects across the country, that sometimes the planning involved is purely federal and sometimes a study is jointly supported by both federal and provincial governments. With all these studies pouring into the minister's department the time for action has now come.

This is the significance of this bill. A fund is being created to handle those special areas where it is clearly indicated that something has to be done on a mass, comprehensive