

*Rural Development*

great agricultural industry and its leaders in Canada. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

[Translation]

**Mr. T. Lefebvre (Pontiac-Témiscamingue):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take this opportunity of speaking to the new resolution because it deals with granting the Department of Forestry \$50 million to set up a fund for rural economic development.

I sincerely believe that in the two counties of Pontiac and Témiscamingue, there are areas in which this new measure can surely be applied. We were recently given the report of an inquiry on rural poverty in four counties. One of the ridings mentioned was that of Pontiac. There, in some remote areas of that large county, we found extremely poor people, lacking in education and means of improvement. The same may happen in the county of Témiscamingue.

I am truly convinced that rural areas in the East are in great need of government assistance. In as prosperous a country as ours, it is abnormal to have regions in which people live in misery, poverty, ignorance, without hope of ever knowing such improvement as would give them as decent a standard of living as the majority of our citizens enjoy. Doubtless there are areas where people live on farms which cannot produce profitably, where the climate will not allow it.

According to the program set up by the department, I understand that in those cases, the solution would be very complicated, that many of these people would be asked to move where their work and their skills would be better rewarded. The problem of rural ridings is one of the major problems in our country. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that during the last electoral campaign, I visited many unfortunate families, where the father was out of work or was paid a salary which did not allow him to enjoy or even come close to a normal standard of living, where children had a long way to go to reach school and often did not even have the necessary clothes to go.

I must congratulate the Minister of Forestry for his interest in rural areas. In passing Bill C-151, we are taking an important step.

[English]

There appeared in the newspapers recently, Mr. Speaker, a report from the Economic Council of Northwestern Quebec. In this report it was stated that the council viewed

[Mr. Danforth.]

with alarm some of the problems facing the rural population in this region. The council has recommended that a study be made of the county of Témiscamingue, regarding the economic situation and possible projects that might be undertaken to help ameliorate the conditions that exist. Just recently also, the Minister of Forestry for the province of Quebec has announced that such a study will be undertaken. This will be a joint federal provincial plan and \$12,000 will be spent on this study. I am confident that if the right kind of study is carried out, good results will be obtained.

I realize, Mr. Speaker, that there were only three regions mentioned in the minister's speech as he outlined the bill this afternoon. However, I find nothing in the reading of the bill that would exclude the counties of Pontiac and Témiscamingue. In these two counties one can find all of nature's unspoiled beauty and natural resources. It is a large region beginning only a few miles from here and ending about 50 miles from the city of Rouyn. There are operating mines in both sections of this riding, north and south, also to be found are many saw mills. At the town of Témiscamingue, in Témiscamingue county, can be found a large pulpmill that has been in continuous operation for almost 50 years, and is owned by the Canadian International Paper Co. In Pontiac county there is now under construction a similar mill by the Consolidated Paper Corporation. This is in Litchfield township near Portage du Fort. There are lakes and streams abounding with fish, and big game hunting is available for both moose and deer. Farming occupies a large segment of the population in both counties. It is truly a region where ARDA and its programs can certainly help to upgrade the living standards of those sections which up to now have not kept up to the more prosperous sections of our vast country.

I sincerely hope that the advisory board set up to administer this fund will take into serious consideration any demands for this region. There is no doubt that Pontiac-Témiscamingue certainly qualifies in respect of physical, economic and social conditions, and has a good potential for economic and social development, including tourism, which is attracting more and more people to our region. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Eric A. Winkler (Grey-Bruce):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this particular measure. I think it has been well stated up to this time