

a local problem, but at the same time it affects all of old Ontario. I hope the necessary steps will be taken in the not too distant future to equitably distribute this great natural resource of ours, water.

(Translation):

**Mr. Boulanger:** Mr. Chairman, like the hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin) and the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue) I want to congratulate the new Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hamilton) for his recent appointment as head of that department. I hope his period of office as such will be a fruitful, albeit a short one.

After three and a half years of Conservative administration, we have just heard the Minister of Agriculture, the second generation of ministers of agriculture in the third session of this 24th parliament under Conservative rule—establish a program which is supposed to save 38 per cent of our Canadian farms from bankruptcy.

After the report we just heard, we may wonder, as do the farmers in this country, whether the new minister has not come down to us from the far north, to give us a short-lived joy, as does a Santa Claus. But whether he comes from one point or another, we are pleased that he discovered the existence of a serious problem with regard to marginal and submarginal farms in this country.

I remember that the former minister of agriculture had also become aware of a serious farm problem, but, after having been at the head of his department for two years and a half, he said, as we may see in *Hansard* of February 23, 1960 on page 1352 when speaking of the technical evolution which was taking place in agriculture:

This evolution has created entirely new conditions which require new thinking, new approaches and new policies if the new situations which have arisen as a result of this technological revolution are to be met successfully, or if there is to be any hope of meeting them successfully. We have recognized that this is the situation, and we have demonstrated it by the numerous new policies we have put into effect and which we think have a very good chance of solving the agricultural problems which have existed in this country now for many years past.

And he said:

The numerous new policies... have a very good chance—

And I shall underline the word "chance", —of solving the agricultural problems which have existed in this country.

At the time he was heading that department it seemed that our farm policy was based, not on principles, but on chance. He has taken his chance, but it was not auspicious, and the former minister later fell out of favour.

*Agreements Respecting Marginal Lands*

I intend to prove my statement and, to that end, I shall quote what the previous minister said at a conference in Calgary, as reported in the *Calgary Herald* of September 26, 1960:

(Text):

The minister said the government will soon start a large scale rural development program to help the lower third of Canadian farmers. These farmers, he said, have an annual income of \$1,000 or less and the government is now making a study of ways for them to increase their earning power.

Such ways may involve encouraging them to develop the tourist industry in their area, to branch into forestry operation or work in small factories established with the continuing industrialization of the country.

(Translation):

So much for the achievements of the former minister. What can we expect from the second generation of ministers of agriculture? In an effort to salvage the prestige of his government, the new minister has recently made a tour of the country and delivered several stirring speeches. At the farmer's union convention in Guelph he said, for instance, the following, as reported in *La Terre de Chez Nous* of November 2, 1960.

For goodness' sake, let us stop once and for all pitting eastern farmers against the western farmers, and city people against farm people.

Such was the minister's plea during this the first major speech he made after being nominated to the Department of Agriculture to succeed the new Minister of National Defence (Mr. Harkness).

And he went on to say:

All of us must recognize that the basic problems of agriculture are an essential and vital matter for all areas of this country, without distinction. The solution to Canada's economic ills is "a deep and comprehensive attack on all fronts at the same time aimed at correcting their weaknesses at their very source."

A few days later, at a federal-provincial conference he made another statement outlining the major points of his program, a program he has put into concrete form by the resolution now under discussion.

I want to point out that at this federal-provincial conference, which was held here in Ottawa on November 9 and 10, 1960, 75 per cent of the subjects that were dealt with had to do with matters related to western agriculture. Eastern farmers' problems were pushed into the background. Yet, there are serious problems in the east; there are problems of family farms. There is the dairy problem. The Minister of Agriculture has not too much sympathy for eastern Canada, and we do not see him there very often.