

*Rural Development*

other ARDA program became a political football of some of the provincial governments. In Ontario patronage is being practised to a great extent in regard to some of the projects that have been undertaken. I am not saying this is a bad thing, particularly in relation to the cases I know about; I do not think it has really hurt the program although it has been the cause of some political deception.

I hope the minister will keep really strong control over this program and that the provinces will not be allowed to sidetrack him in the development of a program for which the federal government will have to pay. I hope the minister will keep right on top of the program. If he wants advice, assistance and co-operation from the provinces, that is fine, but the program should not be jointly administered. If we are to take over one of these areas, let us take over and make it work. If it is successful we will know we are on the right track in achieving a solution for the Canadian rural problem. In that event we will be able to extend the program into other areas. If the minister operates a co-operative program we will never be sure which is the right method to be used in extending it into other areas because we will not know which program should be operated. Let us give the program a chance. I ask the minister to keep federal control over the program. If he does this I think he will have the support of every member of the house in trying to solve what is an immediate and very serious problem.

[Translation]

**Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I must congratulate the Minister of Forestry (Mr. Sauvé) for introducing Bill C-151 which, in conjunction with the ARDA program, will help to develop further the areas in need of help. I did not speak very long, approximately three or four minutes at the stage of the resolution because I wanted to keep what I had to say until the bill itself was introduced. It is always more interesting to speak when there is something to refer to than trying to guess what it is all about.

We will try not to keep the discussion going too long in order to vote those amounts as soon as possible. However, they should not be voted too quickly because there is an election campaign going on right now in Quebec and one knows that the province is always ready to make political hay out of such good things. Our province must not be trusted. I would not like to see a recurrence of what happened during my last election

[Mr. Peters.]

campaign, namely ARDA money being used for political purposes.

The minister explained his bill at length and did it well. He started by telling us about poverty in rural areas and ended by saying that something had been done. Some things have been done in the last three years but a lot remains to be done, and the best tool is always money. Those are briefly the general ideas of his speech.

With regard to poverty, Mr. Speaker, if I may talk about my region, and I must do it in order to make it better known to the minister, poverty in my region has increased particularly over the last thirty years. There is no need to make a socio-economic study to discover it. I live in that region and I know it. Between 30 and 35 per cent of the farmers earned a living from farming and approximately 60 per cent of them were part-time farmers and part-time loggers. Those who lived from farming have kept on doing so. Because of higher taxes, but especially the high price of mechanization, those farmers faced with bankruptcy because they have to buy machinery much too costly in proportion to their income, leave after 15 or 20 years. Some family estates were mortgaged, whereas farm lands often valued at \$50,000 and \$60,000, without any mortgage, were mortgaged to the hilt 15 or 20 years later. This is what we see today. Farmers are still making a living on their farms, but less than 3 per cent of the farms are not mortgaged. That is the first problem to solve.

Farm assistance was not granted in time and that was the first mistake. The governments failed to help those farmers to modernize their farms. All government appropriations went to help other provinces. I am not blaming these other provinces, they were lucky, but we have simply been forgotten. I am not blaming the federal government, far from it, but I do blame my own province which failed to take action at the proper time and which still has not done, and I will prove it later on, what it should have in order to use ARDA.

Those farmers who depended on their farms for a living have received no assistance when they should have, and now they are faced with bankruptcy. The last three years have been particularly bad for the farmers of my riding, because of the weather, the rain-making machine, the artificial rain. For three years in a row the farmers have not even produced enough to feed their own livestock. And, last fall, all dairy cattle herds were