

Rural Development

proposal that deserves the support of all hon. members of the house.

Hon. Alvin Hamilton (Qu'Appelle): Mr. Speaker, I think I can speak on behalf of all the members in all parties on this side of the house when I thank the minister for giving us not only the general aims and objectives of this legislation but also for being courteous enough to tell us something about what has been done in detail. I think what the minister has done today could be an example for other ministers in the government. By giving us a statement that has been clear, comprehensive and non-partisan he has provided us with an opportunity to discuss the subject in the manner in which it should be discussed. I do not believe there is any question but that there is no place for partisanship in a discussion of a subject like poverty, whether it be at the rural level or the urban level.

The problem that affects the industrialized nations of the world, where the wealth of those who are doing well increases steadily, is that you have in the midst of this affluence a body of poor in the cities and rural areas who do not seem to be able to take advantage of the updraft in the economy. If they are left too long in this environment they simply begin to think it is a way of life. Then you have a deep sociological problem which cannot be resolved by government action. It is a question of changing the attitude of the people concerned.

Having said these things and realizing, I think, that the minister is emotionally involved with these people, I think the job of the members of the opposition should be to discuss this legislation in principle, conveying the ideas that we believe are worthy of commendation to the house as well as pointing out what might be improvements. First of all, this legislation, when enacted by parliament, creates a fund which is to be administered by the minister and an advisory board and upon which special areas of this country will be able to draw for special projects. This measure will be placed alongside the ARDA program. In my judgment it gives some chance to control the expenditure of money for this particular type of development in special areas.

I think this principle is good. It allows those who have control of the finances of our country to establish more clearly what the criteria of the program are and to assess if the money is being well spent rather than have moneys provided for an overall ARDA

[Mr. Sauvé.]

program. In order to refresh the memories of hon. members as to the purpose of ARDA, I may say it was set up originally with three purposes in mind. The first was land use. Land use programs really can only be carried out by government. They are strictly a federal or provincial government operation.

The second purpose of ARDA was the conservation of land and water. This is a physical task which, once again, is usually beyond the financial and physical capabilities of the individual farmer. This too will be largely a government operation.

The third purpose of ARDA was rural development. In this regard you muster all the human resources of the area, not only those who are not doing too well but the business and professional people. The government services available bring all these human resources together in a joint effort to try to lift the income level of the area. It is under this section of ARDA that this particular bill applies. Under the bill a fund of \$50 million is to be established upon which the minister and his advisory board can call to help in those areas which are designated as special areas.

The minister has described three special areas in Canada. One is the Interlake area of Manitoba. The second is the lower St. Lawrence on the south side, including the Magdalen Islands, while the third area is in northern New Brunswick. In his statement the minister mentioned the C.B.C. program concerning one of these counties in northern New Brunswick. I watched that show and listened to it. I do not believe you can say anything else but that no nation can stand idly by and allow a situation like that to continue. These are essentially sound, moral people, but you could tell from their conversation that their faith in themselves and their hope for the future had almost disappeared. They did not know what to do. This program will enable us to bring them help.

There was another program in the same series dealing with a county near Ottawa. The difference between these two counties was clearcut. I believe the county in New Brunswick was Gloucester. The people of the county in Ontario had not lost faith. They were struggling to stay off relief. They believed in their land and believed that their country would produce a way of life for them. They were ready and willing to take on any challenge they were given. A county like this could be easily made into a pilot project under ARDA because here you have the