

Rural Development

● (9:40 p.m.)

There are many other points we could refer to, but we hope to have an opportunity to discuss them at another time. I thank the hon. members of this house for the courtesy they have shown in listening to the points I have put to them. In conclusion, I again say, let us get on with the job of making ARDA work as a measure increasing the prosperity of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by Mr. Turner for Mr. Sauvé, seconded by Mr. Côté (Longueuil) that Bill C-152, an act to amend the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act—

Mr. Kindt: Mr. Speaker, I should like to interrupt on a point of order and ask the minister whether he intends to answer some of the questions we have posed? There still is time for him to do so.

Mr. Speaker: I am not sure whether at this time, the question having been put to some extent, the minister should be allowed to speak.

Mr. Kindt: I was up before the question was put, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps we should allow the minister to speak, but if he does he will close the debate.

Hon. Maurice Sauvé (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to answer hon. members' questions when we reach consideration on item 1 at the committee stage, but if hon. members prefer that I do so now I will be pleased to comply.

It must be clear from what I said in opening the debate this evening that Bill C-152 is strictly of an administrative nature. Had it not been for an interpretation given by the Department of Justice regarding the restrictive nature of the original bill we should not be considering the bill now before us. I trust hon. members understand clearly that that is the only purpose of this bill. This will be apparent from a reading of the explanatory notes in the bill, which are in part as follows:

The general purpose of these amendments is to extend the application of the act to all rural areas in Canada where projects of the nature provided

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]

for under the act can be advantageously undertaken whether or not the area in question is in whole or in part an agricultural area.

This amendment removes the reference to agricultural lands from the long title and eliminates the preamble which is considered to restrict the application of the act.

The underlining of the words in the bill clearly indicate where the amendments are to be made. At the risk of being repetitious, let me say again that the purpose of this bill is purely administrative. There is no intention at all to amend this very beneficial legislation which was passed in 1961 under the previous administration.

In my opening remarks I paid tribute not only to the minister of agriculture originally responsible for this act, but also to the minister before him who introduced this legislation by way of a report to a cabinet committee. I refer to the hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Harkness). We have proposed this bill in order to comply with a request from the Department of Justice.

Having regard to the word ARDA, which in French we call SIGLE, after discussion on March 18 when the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Robichaud) introduced the resolution and the remarks of hon. members of parliament at that time, we decided definitely to retain that name. On March 18 the Minister of Fisheries said, as recorded at page 2886 of *Hansard* for that date:

It is proposed that the term "ARDA" continue to be used to refer to the Act and the program—

We originally proposed to the drafters of this bill that the name ARDA should be included in the new title but we were informed that this was not necessary. However, because of the remarks of hon. members on March 18, as I said earlier I propose to move an amendment to clause 2 in the bill in order that the name ARDA will remain.

I hope that all hon. members will accept my explanation that the only purpose of this bill is an administrative one. I thank all hon. members for their interest in this bill, most of whom have referred to the continued use of ARDA. Perhaps I may be allowed to reply first to the remarks of the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier).

[*Translation*]

May I point out to the hon. member for Roberval (Mr. Gauthier) that the constitution itself justifies the federal government to intervene in the field of agriculture. Indeed, section 95 of the constitution authorizes the