

*Rural Development*

back benches approve wholeheartedly. They set an example that other members have followed. I should like to congratulate all members who have spoken in the debate because it has been a very worth-while discussion.

Speaking of Renfrew county, I should like to say that we have a very active ARDA committee which is part of Renfrew county council. The committee has done excellent work to date, has been most active and at this time I should like to pay my tribute to its members.

The 1966 Renfrew county budget for ARDA projects provides for a gross expenditure of a little over \$206,000, \$26,000 of which will be county money. ARDA, over the years since its inception, has paid for several feasibility and engineering studies that have been made in the county on different projects.

Possibly there is a special case to be made out for the county. Hon. members will recall that in the days when timber was being cut for the British navy Renfrew county was one of the areas in Canada that saw its hills stripped of virgin pine. In many instances the areas affected have not survived that action. Today reforestation under the ARDA program plays a major part in Renfrew county. The county spends in the neighbourhood of \$20,000 a year for reforestation in joint ARDA projects.

Another thing accomplished under ARDA has been the dredging of sections of the Muskrat river and the construction of a dam. The total project cost was approximately \$113,000. At this time I will not go into other projects.

However, I should like to mention something else which involved much local initiative on the part of the people in various areas of Renfrew county, namely, the maple syrup project. One farmer had the idea that he should make a survey of the area for purposes of maple syrup production. He found that there were over one million maple trees in the area. ARDA has approved a considerable grant of money to the people interested for the development of this industry. These people are to be congratulated for their initiative.

I should like to emphasize strongly before I sit down that I feel ARDA should supply funds to promote education in poverty stricken rural areas. In many instances where there is rural poverty there are poor educational facilities. I am thinking not only of

elementary education. At some time in the future I hope that funds may be provided through ARDA to local areas or counties with rural poverty in order to build agricultural schools to give basic agricultural training to the young people in those areas, thereby helping to train them to be community leaders. This would also give them ideas for building up their areas and would prepare them to take the initiative in bringing about improvements locally. I do not think there need be any conflict with provincial jurisdiction over education. We often hear the saying: Whoever pays the piper calls the tune. This money could be given to the provinces with the single proviso that it be used for educational purposes. There would be no interference with provincial jurisdiction in any way.

• (5:50 p.m.)

I should like to leave this thought with the house because I feel that one of the ways to eradicate local poverty in Canada is by helping people to help themselves. This could certainly be done if better educational facilities were provided in some areas.

**Mr. A. D. Alkenbrack (Prince Edward-Lennox):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to make a few comments on this bill. A bill as wide in its application as the one we are now considering certainly deserves full and constructive debate.

The minister has said that 500,000 families or two million Canadians are living in rural poverty. I should like to point out that this has only been the case lately since the advent of the Liberal government and the high cost of living which has accompanied their term of office. The minister also mentioned the low standard of living of rural people. I do not think he has expressed the position altogether fairly and I must reply by saying that the standard of living of rural people is generally better in a rural setting than the abject and deplorable poverty of many thousands of our people who live in other than rural areas.

The broad, general principles of this bill constitute a step in the right direction and we interpret them as a concerted effort on the part of the government and parliament to rescue our rural areas and a wide section of the agricultural industry from despair and oblivion.

I pointed out to the house on March 31 the need for care when enacting legislation of this kind, the need to preserve the private enterprise capability of our farmers. I wish