

*Supply—Forestry and Rural Development*

six years to see 500 or 600 local ARDA groups. How many are there? There are about five or ten. I know there is good work being done in the valleys of British Columbia and in each of the provinces, but in respect of this essential part of the legislation there is no leadership by anyone, provincially, federally or locally.

There should be field teams under the federal administration for each of the disciplines represented, which will go out and work with the provincial people, not to interfere with their constitutional rights but to show them that we at the federal level are anxious to work with them and learn how to use the available techniques. Larger provinces like Ontario and Quebec should have four or five pilot operations going. They may be big ones, like the Gaspé operation, if you like. But what about the Renfrew area in the Ottawa valley; how about Lanark in the Ottawa valley? These are two types of areas which have different types of redevelopment possibilities. The people in the maritimes and in the Ottawa valley have the necessary human resources and the willingness.

This brings me to my final point. I think the officials must bear some of the blame for the slow movement of ARDA. I shall be straightforward in my criticism by putting it this way. Nearly all the economists who deal with agricultural economy today are talking about this nonsense, which the people in the press who know nothing about it repeat, that the only way to revitalize agriculture in Canada is by having bigger and bigger farm units. I describe this myth as nonsense, because I know what I am talking about. This may be necessary in a few areas where commercial production is possible, or in the almost desert areas of southern Saskatchewan and southern Alberta. In such areas a few larger units may be necessary. The idea for four or five years now has been to move toward intensive rather than extensive agriculture. We see the smart farmers reducing their acreage so that two pairs of hands, such as a man and his wife or a man and son, can handle the work and achieve greater productivity for the two pairs of hands.

We are getting away slowly from the inefficient and expensive type of program which the economists talk about. They talk about this simply because someone enunciated this theory about 30 years ago. This is evident in the prairies where more wheat is being produced today. It is not the big farms but rather the small farms which are getting more production per acre. My suggestion to

[Mr. Hamilton.]

the officials is that they should get off this kick that every farm should be bigger and bigger. The bigger farmer, in the long range, cannot compete with the smaller efficient farmer. I am talking about efficiency in production per unit. Any person who digs down into this will soon find the truth in these remarks. The officials have to get off this kick that the agricultural economists have been following for 40 years, because they do not have the courage to change it even when the evidence supporting a change is developing in front of their eyes. We will eventually see a change when the officials untie themselves from the myths of the past.

• (4:00 p.m.)

I have put forward one or two concepts this afternoon in respect of field teams, co-operation between the provinces, and the minister taking the initiative whenever an opportunity appears. I am sure if the department follows this advice it will find that the provinces will be more than anxious to co-operate.

Let me say one final word about feed grain. For reasons that none of us will ever know, the federal government last year, when Mr. Pickersgill was in charge of the Department of Transport, sold a grain elevator in Quebec city to Bunge, a South American company. That elevator was making a good profit and protecting the farmers of Quebec in that area in so far as a supply of feed grain was concerned. We are now hearing rumours which bear out our fears regarding the Quebec government's warning. The dealers no longer can get their grain into this elevator.

I know the government is aware of this problem but I do not know whether this minister was involved in the deal. I do not even know what the deal was or why it was made. Perhaps this was the result of the cut-off in respect of the Seven Islands elevator. All I know is that the government is now in trouble in so far as feed grain in Montreal and Quebec city is concerned. Perhaps the government was wise in allowing Mr. Pickersgill to get out of the cabinet and into the Canadian Transport Commission. Maybe these funny deals will no longer occur. In any event I warned the government about the difficulties resulting from the sale of that grain elevator, which to my mind was a very serious blunder. If the Quebec farmers suffer as a result we will know where to lay the blame.