

left a 50-foot layer of rich, heavy soil. In many other parts of the country, when the topsoil is blown off there is no productive soil left.

Honourable senators, in conclusion, let me say that a fruit belt like that on the Niagara Peninsula is truly a national heritage, not really the property of the man who is at liberty to sell it and make his fortune, and thereby to deny its use for farming for all time.

Hon. John A. McDonald: Honourable senators, I shall try to make myself heard, in spite of a cold, which unfortunately I contracted last week.

In the first place, I beg my honourable leader's pardon for interrupting.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Oh, no; the interpolation was very apt.

Hon. Mr. McDonald: Some years ago, when I was with the Department of Agriculture in Nova Scotia, we made an experiment on a nine-mile stretch of road in the County of Antigonish, when we tried to get some farmers to move off of so-called marginal lands onto lands in better communities, with good neighbours, near churches and schools. Had the farmers agreed, we could have closed that piece of road and saved the Government the considerable expense of its upkeep. However, we could not persuade the farmers to move. It will be seen, therefore, that the human element has to be taken into consideration, for people object to leaving their homes.

No doubt there are marginal lands in every province. I am wondering if the committee will find that on some marginal lands the farmers are not growing crops suitable to the land, or are crippled for lack of funds. Possibly some farmers need to change their methods. All these matters must be considered by the committee.

In the eastern part of Canada from which I come the water situation is the reverse of what it is in the Prairie provinces. On the prairies the great need is to take water into the land, mainly by irrigation. Our problem in the east is to get rid of water by drainage. If the Government will do what it has done in times past, rebuild our dikes and aboteaux to keep the tide waters from flooding our best land in the Maritime provinces, it will be of great help. However, there will still be labour and other problems on the farms.

I hope I speak for all the members of the committee when I say that I wish other groups would do as Mount Allison University did last week—organize a round table discussion on this subject. Participating in the discussion were the Deputy Ministers of

Agriculture of the provinces of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and also a very well-informed gentleman from New Brunswick. It was a most interesting discussion, and I am sure the committee will want to have the report of that constructive meeting. Many important questions were asked by the large audience. It would be of great help to the committee if groups across Canada studied this subject and passed on their thoughts to us. I know that each and every member of the committee intends to be as thorough as possible, yet we cannot do much without the co-operation of ministers and deputy ministers of various departments, head of divisions, and principals and professors of agricultural colleges, as well as good farmers, and farmers that are not so good—the good ones to tell us how they have been successful, and the others to tell us of their problems.

Hon. T. A. Crerar: Honourable senators, by any consideration that is given to it, in my humble judgment, this resolution is one of the most important that has come before this house, certainly during the time I have been a member of it.

The Government, and the Prime Minister particularly, are to be warmly commended for bringing forward this idea and giving to this honourable house the responsibility of examining into the matters involved.

Let me say at the outset that we will view this matter in far too narrow a context if we think of it only as appertaining to agriculture. True, agriculture is a very important industry in this country. But the use of land and the conservation of forests and of water are and should be problems of immense interest to this young country. Not only is this true of the present time, but it is of prime importance to its future happiness and well-being. In this respect it would appear the resolution is broad enough to cover an examination into all these matters.

The committee is asked to consider and report on land use in Canada. Now, that does not confine the study to land use for agriculture. The field is broad; we can examine the whole problem of the use of land in its widest application.

The committee is next asked to determine what should be done to ensure that our land resources are most effectively utilized for the benefit of the Canadian economy and the Canadian people. That refers not only to agricultural land, but to all lands, and to how they can be utilized and developed for the benefit of the Canadian people. The Committee is also asked to examine into