

The ARDA legislation arose out of recognition of a national interest in achieving better land use, improving the viability of farm units which are at present uneconomic, and of improving income and employment opportunities in rural areas. In many rural areas of Canada, income and living standards are unacceptably low and present land use is faulty or inefficient. To some considerable degree these economic, social and conservation problems, which interact to produce an adverse effect on rural standard of life, arise from farm mechanization; the more efficient, highly mechanized farmers, with adequate land and operating capital, are able to maintain profitable farming operations notwithstanding a relatively low market price for farm produce and the operators of smaller, less mechanized farms are thereby placed at a severe disadvantage. As a result, the number of farms in Canada has decreased since 1931 from about three quarters of a million to fewer than half a million and the trend toward farm consolidation and abandonment is continuing.

The Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act is enabling legislation, intended to be complementary and supplementary to existing federal and provincial legislation in respect of renewable resources and rural social and economic development. It is intended to aid in the correlation and expansion of existing programs, and to fill substantial gaps where current programs do not meet present needs. It has been clearly recognized that, in addition to improved conservation and resource utilization and general economic stimulation, a social process of community development is essential—a process whereby local citizens organize to bring together local institutions and employ the technical counsel of university, professional and governmental agencies to study their physical and economic resources and the capabilities of the people; subsequently developing comprehensive economic and social plans to be implemented co-operatively by all levels of government and private organizations.

Under the ARDA program up to the spring of 1964, seven Rural Development Areas had been designated as areas in which intensive programs of social and economic development and resources development would be undertaken: Meadow Lake, Torch River and Broadview in Saskatchewan; the Interlake District in Manitoba; the Abitibi-Témiscamingue area and the Gaspé-Lower St. Lawrence-Îles de la Madeleine area in Quebec; and Prince County of Prince Edward Island. Ten Rural Research Regions had been designated as areas for intensive, comprehensive research relative to rural development: Census Division 16 in Saskatchewan; 11 counties in eastern Ontario; the Rouge River Valley and the Brome-Stanstead area of Quebec; northeastern New Brunswick; the Nova Scotia North Shore; and, in Newfoundland, the areas of St. Barbe-Coast, St. Andrews-St. George, Fogo-Bonavista, and South Avalon.

At the end of ARDA's first full year of operation, Mar. 31, 1964, 368 federal-provincial projects had been approved. The total estimated cost of these projects was nearly \$23,627,000, of which the Federal Government's share was approximately \$12,401,000. In addition, 24 purely federal projects, mainly research, cost an estimated \$299,000.

Typical of the major ARDA soil and water conservation and alternate land use projects were: stream channel improvement over 10 miles of the Rivière Noire watercourse of Quebec to reclaim 1,700 acres of land for the benefit of 1,480 farmers, at a cost of \$247,000; acquisition of submarginal agricultural land in eight north-central Ontario counties and districts for forestry, recreation and wildlife purposes, at a cost of \$1,689,000; reconstruction of the Grassmere Drain in Manitoba to provide drainage for 182 sq. miles of good agricultural land; the Good Spirit Community Pasture in Saskatchewan, developed at a cost of \$713,000; agronomic and engineering studies related to irrigation in Alberta, at a cost of \$783,000; and in British Columbia the rehabilitation of eight irrigation districts at a total cost of \$622,000 to preserve 15,000 acres of good agricultural land.

The Canada Land Inventory.—The Canada Land Inventory being co-ordinated by the ARDA Administration has been made possible by the extensive soil classification work undertaken in Canada over the past half-century. The co-operative Soil Surveys, which have been under way since 1935, are staffed by soil specialists of federal and provincial governments and universities and are supported by all senior governments.