

*Farm Machinery*

Agriculture (Mr. Hays), is to foster centralization, which, unfortunately, will mean the end of the family farm, of the ancestral land.

I listened with much interest to the hon. member for Richmond-Wolfe (Mr. Asselin). I know he is a gentleman farmer. He said that during the week end, he met farmers in his constituency and discussed this matter with them. I also had the same opportunity, Mr. Speaker, and I have the honour to represent a riding where farm lands are among the richest in my province. Indeed, it is a well known fact that this area extending south of the Laurentian plateau, between Champlain and Lanoraie, has the most productive and the richest farm lands in Quebec. Over the week end I met the farmers of my riding, and, strange to say, those who normally should hope or wish for such legislation are indifferent in this respect.

While the farms in my district, in the riding of Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière, are the most productive, their owners are indifferent to the proposed legislation. They even asked me to suggest to the government the elaboration of a farm policy which would enable them to get a good revenue from their farms, rather than the possibility of borrowing, which creates neither markets nor additional income for the farmer, which would justify further facilities for borrowing, as provided by the legislation now before us.

As far as the short speech of the hon. member for Richmond-Wolfe is concerned, I very much liked his disguised but rather alarming invitation to the Minister of Agriculture, when he told him that the government should base its program on a national policy.

This is very serious, Mr. Speaker. This was a cry of despair from the hon. member for Richmond-Wolfe which he was unable to conceal. Even though, because of cabinet solidarity, he dutifully commended the Minister of Agriculture, he became, at one point, the spokesman of the farmers in his district, when entreating the Minister of Agriculture to enact farm legislation based on a national farm policy. That is what eastern farmers in the province of Quebec and those of my own riding are hoping for.

I feel that the bill now before us further contributes to the disappearance of the old homestead because, at the federal as well as the provincial level, there seems to be less and less concern for the small farmer, while the development of large farm operations is fostered, so that the farmer will not be master on his own land any more. And yet they

[Mr. Paul.]

used to tell us, in provincial politics, that one should be the master in his own house.

Ask the farmers if they are their own masters today. They have become the slaves of the feed mills and of the finance companies to buy machinery. And now the government introduces a disguised, camouflaged and ineffective piece of legislation which will supposedly save the farm economy in eastern Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this legislation is highly disguised, as was so well pointed out by the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent). Farmers must be warned against the dangers of such legislation. The Minister of Agriculture will tell us that it is an excellent bill since it enables small farmers to get greater financial facilities towards the purchase of machinery.

Mr. Speaker, if the farmer derives sufficient revenues from the sale of his products, if he is assured of stable revenues, if he is given appropriate outlets for his agricultural products, I do not believe that he will be obliged to belong to a co-operative, a syndicate or a group, in order to purchase the agricultural equipment which will enable him to obtain a maximum output on his farm.

There is a danger, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to ask the Minister of Agriculture several questions, because this is another attempt to intrude into the field of companies which come under civil law.

Once more the government is invading the area of civil law. Who will be responsible for the commitments and obligations of those who will form those syndicates? We do not know. Will the formation of those syndicates come under federal jurisdiction? For instance, in the province of Quebec, will it come under the act respecting professional syndicates, which requires a membership or participation of 20 persons to form a company? Is this legislation intended to settle the matter of civil law concerning companies? Besides, everybody knows, and it is well specified in the bill, as the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona mentioned a while ago, that each farmer will be personally and totally liable, jointly responsible, for the commitments he made or will make with his two other associates.

Mr. Speaker, is that a legislative measure likely to promote, stimulate and encourage agriculture, or is it not rather another means placed at the disposal of irresponsible farmers to obtain machinery? Suppose that three farmers living in a certain range in my riding, I shall not name them, but who live on a