

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

I urge the parliamentary secretary to tell the House tonight, to tell those who are concerned about the agricultural economy and the preservation of the family farm, exactly what the government has in mind as far as the consolidation of farm units is concerned. It is our position in the NDP that one ought not to consider a stabilization plan without taking into consideration the special place which family farm units occupy in our national life. If we are really concerned about the preservation of the family farm and about social and economic conditions, we must take into consideration the probable effect of the paragraph I have just quoted upon the farming economy, its effect upon the producers.

In closing, I contend that since the agricultural industry is the most important industry in Canada it is high time we paid more attention to it and let the actual producer know what is going on in any plan which may affect him, especially as far as the family farm is concerned.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I wish first to thank the hon. member for Moose Jaw (Mr. Skoberg) for the arguments he has just developed in the House and I can assure him that the future of family farms is certainly something of concern for all members of the House and particularly for the officers of the Department of Agriculture. Certainly no member can brush aside the subject of family farms but I simply wish to point out to the hon. member that there are several types of family farms and

that their future depends chiefly on the families which operate them.

In any case, we do not have much time and I wish to assure the hon. member that the studies carried out so far by the Department of Agriculture on the question of low income farms and operations known as family farms, whatever their size, have always taken into account the expectations and objectives of the people concerned and it will continue to be so in the future.

In the preparation of programs, it has been clearly established that family farms consolidation will depend on the decision of those who have to bear the consequences of such an operation, namely the farmer and his family. I think this is the most satisfactory way to insure that the farm structure of the future will be acceptable to those who shall make a living from it.

I must also remind the hon. member that as late as yesterday the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) indicated that discussions are under way between all ministers of Agriculture and premiers with a view to establishing the adjustment policy to be introduced in the House eventually and I can assure him further that there will be a high degree of consultation so that hon. members, the government and the people concerned can work out a system which will take into account the farmers' interests and aspirations.

I wish to assure him sincerely that we are very much concerned by the present state of family farms.

Motion agreed to and the House adjourned at 10.28 p.m.