

Farm Credit Act

Farm Credit Corporation in order that its inspectors not only set up an office in our area made up of three ridings, but let them take the trouble to visit the farm and see for themselves what is the value of the soil and the ability of the farmer, as well as the conditions under which his family lives, in order to help him financially and in a logical and practical way. This way, the future of a farmer would not be decided by officials in an office 300 miles distant; it would be decided on the spot whether the farmer should be assisted or abandoned to his fate.

Now, Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the members for their kind attention.

Mr. Dumont: Mr. Chairman, does the member for Matapedia-Matane permit a question? Does he favour the construction of a grain elevator at Rimouski, which would serve not only the farmers in the Matapedia valley but also those living as far as St. Leon le Grand? Such an undertaking would be a good thing.

The Chairman: I should like to point out to the hon. member for Bellechasse that as the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane has not used up all his time—in fact he has one minute left—he has the right, under the standing orders, to reply to the member for Bellechasse if he wishes to.

Mr. Belzile: I am pleased to say to the hon. member for Bellechasse that I am all in favour of the project he has just mentioned.

For his information, I might add, that in my capacity as a supporter of the government, I have been interceding for three years with the proper authorities to obtain exactly the same thing as he is asking as a member of the opposition.

Mr. Drouin: Mr. Chairman, may I associate myself with those who, before me, have taken the floor since the house has been sitting in committee to congratulate you on your appointment to the chairmanship. I fully support the kind words that have been said about you, as well as about the vice-chairman who is now occupying your chair and to whom I offer my best wishes.

I should like also to congratulate the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane who has raised a fine family of 14 children during the prosperous 22 years of Liberal administration. Surely he would not have succeeded so well under a Conservative austerity program.

[Mr. Belzile.]

Before going on to the bill now before us, may I say, for the information of the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane, that I was aware on October 4 last of the existence of the dairy industry board.

I only deplored, at the time, a state of affairs which is now to the advantage of large dairies, and detrimental to our milk producers. I am convinced that if the hon. member is really what he described himself to be, a moment ago, he will also deplore that situation. So, I take this opportunity to wish the hon. member for Matapedia-Matane a little more influence in his party, in order that it will not take three years to carry out the fine projects recommended by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hamilton).

The official opposition is favourable to increasing the capital of the Farm Credit Corporation from \$12 to \$16 million so as to increase the lending capacity of the corporation from \$300 to \$400 million and make it possible for the corporation to be more generous with regard to loan applications submitted to it. We hope that eastern farmers will have their fair share of that increase in the corporation's funds.

Unfortunately, our eastern farmers, and more particularly those of the province of Quebec, have not sufficiently benefited from farm credit loans in the last few years.

Indeed, one only has to look at the last financial report of the Farm Credit Corporation to realize that all the farmers are not equally taking advantage of the facilities under this act.

When I refer to the last report of the Farm Credit Corporation for the fiscal year ending on March 31, 1962, I see, on page 20 of this publication, a table giving the following figures.

During the fiscal year ending March 31, 1962, the farmers from the province of Saskatchewan were allowed 1,936 loans, while during the same period, only 109 loans were approved for the farmers in the province of Quebec. And, still more significant perhaps, if we compare this table with the one that is to be found on page 22, we see that the number of loans actually handed out in Saskatchewan during this period amounted to 1,890, hardly 2 per cent less than the number which had been approved. On the other hand, in the province of Quebec only 66 loans were