

Farm Improvement Loans Act

We have the economic family farm unit which we take as the basis of our agricultural economy, but in my district I have a lot of what I term maintenance farmers. These are people who on five to ten acres are growing fruit, producing poultry or carrying on dairying on a small scale. Over the year their total returns from a financial point of view do not compare very favourably with the income expected by some other people. They grow fruit, have their own cows, produce their own pork and bacon and do their own canning. They also grow other commodities on the ranch and in most cases are able to produce their own fuel. They burn wood.

In my district I have dozens and dozens of what I call maintenance farmers living on beautiful sites. They have lovely orchards and lawns and nice houses and driveways. From the point of view of some people their standard of living is not high, but from their own point of view they have an adequate standard of living, and a high standard of living so far as the cultural aspects of life are concerned. I believe there is a place for the maintenance farm in our economy. We cannot judge the success of all phases of agriculture by figures only, because figures alone do not tell the whole story.

I am one who believes that in the future we have to look toward decentralizing our cities and their populations and decentralizing industry. Instead of having increasingly larger units which eventually become factory farms and having people who were farming moving to the cities, I think we should be doing everything we can to maintain and develop a healthy, satisfactory rural economy.

I also believe there is a place for part time farming. I find it is being engaged in more and more and I think it should be encouraged. It involves men who are connected with the forest industry, persons who are possibly doing some tree farming, others who are engaged in beekeeping, in fact part time farmers of various kinds. I think the more people we can influence to become interested in the soil in Canada the better it will be for our country, and the healthier and more stable will be our society. I always maintain we should work for the development of these three types of farms, and there is a great deal of research and investigation required before we can come to definite conclusions on some of these matters.

Now, during recent years there has been a development of interest and it relates to the possibilities offered by family company farming. This type of farming will not conflict with the traditional concept of the family farm. In fact, it has several advantages over the

single ownership system. For example, where the farming operation is of considerable size or where several members of the family are involved, it offers an excellent arrangement for the handling of such problems as intra-family ownership and estate planning. This has become a problem so far as many farmers are concerned in recent years. No one would have thought of such a thing 20 years ago—that a farmer would have been worried about the value of his estate, succession duties, and so on. More and more those members who are interested in these questions are finding that farmers are very concerned about this, because of the liquidation of the family enterprise.

In my opinion, the future will see a great increase in the family company type of farming. I do not think it is going to change the picture whatever, but it makes for more efficient farming and assured security of the family interested in the development of the farm itself. However, Mr. Chairman, I do want to say that in my opinion there is a great need for further research and study of the various problems surrounding the development of these various types of farming and ownership, particularly with respect to the financing of the purchase of land. As the previous member said, this is of particular interest to the young people who wish to go into farming. Then there is the question of the purchase of equipment and the provision of housing and other buildings necessary for the operation of a modern farm.

While we have lengthy Canadian experience, very competent federal and provincial staffs, as well as competent agriculture staffs on universities throughout Canada, I think we can still learn from the experience of other countries. I just want to deal briefly with two of them. Let me say this, that Canada has no monopoly whatever on the problems surrounding the maintenance and development of the family farm. This is a very general problem in portions of Europe, Great Britain, the United States, New Zealand and Australia. In Britain, for instance, the government has established what is called a small farmer assistance scheme which is devised to assist small farmers who own not less than 20 acres and no more than 100 acres of crop land. That is a small scale farm compared to some in Canada, but this assistance is in the form of direct grants of up to \$3,000 for the improvement of land by tillage, drainage or irrigation, for fertilizers, and so on. This, as I say, is an experiment in Great Britain in an attempt to make it possible for these smaller units