

Farm Machinery

described the measure, it is creeping socialism. We have had creeping socialism for a long time, and as a matter of fact every progressive move is a move toward socialist principles. The principle of the bill is good; it is in fact excellent, and I commend the government for introducing it. But I also commend the official opposition for recommending that it be now referred to a committee. Why do I take this position, Mr. Speaker? It is because without any doubt improvements can be made to the bill in the interests of the farmers of this country, and on the agriculture committee we have representatives from all parties of those who are interested in agriculture; we also have practical farmers who know farming and its basic operation.

I am convinced that a reference of this bill to the agriculture committee, if it is considered—as I am certain it will be—on an unbiased and non-political basis, will result in the bill being referred back to the house strengthened with the advice of the all-party committee. It will be referred back to the house with the changes required to resolve the doubts that are in the minds of some of us at the present time. I refer for example to the question of the interest rate. As I understand the principle of the bill and as I have discussed it with hon. members of this house, I am not sure what is the interest rate and whether it basically means that farmers co-operatively working under the provisions of this bill will not be paying a higher interest rate than that actually charged by the banks. I have not found one member of the house with whom I have discussed this question who can make it clear to me that this will not be the case.

Perhaps of even more importance than that however—and this is a matter that will be discussed if the bill is referred to the agriculture committee—is a principle that is most involved and, unless clarified, most dangerous. I refer not to any clause but to the principle of the bill, whereby a number of farmers, each of whom individually cannot buy the machinery needed to work in the agricultural, automated sector, can get together in order to buy this machinery. Let us say that one farmer puts up \$1,000, one \$10,000 and one \$20,000. Each one, including the farmer who puts up \$1,000, under the bill as I read it is responsible for the entire cost of the machinery to be used in their co-operative operation. In other words, if a farmer puts up \$1,000 and goes to a bank for a loan for something else, his commitment is not for \$1,000 but is for the entire

cost of the co-operative enterprise in respect of the purchase of this machinery. That is the way I read the bill. I am certain that is not what was meant to be the principle when the government introduced this measure. I am sure it was not intended that one farmer who is part of a co-operative ownership in order to build up the efficiency of his farm should be held individually responsible for the entire cost of the machinery purchased. I raise this question, Mr. Speaker, because I cannot read this bill in any other way.

Mr. Francis: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch) wish to reply to a question from the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Francis)?

Mr. Winch: Yes.

Mr. Francis: I think I understand the effect of the amendment, which would be to refer not the bill to a committee but the subject matter of the bill. Does the hon. member not understand that this would kill the bill?

Mr. Winch: Does the hon. member actually want to put that question to me? Is he saying that on second reading of the bill reference of the subject matter to a committee means that the bill is killed?

Mr. MacNaught: Absolutely.

Mr. Winch: I presume the government are going to pass the principle of the bill. If they are not, then why in God's name did they introduce it? If the hon. member wants to raise a technicality then that is all right. But I am saying that the bill should be referred to the committee on agriculture and that that committee, which is representative of all hon. members of the house and composed mainly of practising farmers, would then have the opportunity of going over the bill and making representations to this house. It is on that basis that I am discussing this amendment. I agree 100 per cent with the principle of the bill and I am glad the government has brought it in. I also agree that it should be referred to the committee, because I think it can be strengthened, and the Minister of Agriculture will welcome that. The committee will take care of the phases of the bill which disturb some of us. I am not allowed to make reference to any of the clauses, but hon. members who have read the bill will know the clause to which I refer. Therefore I hope that the bill will be referred to the agriculture committee and that the government will give