

Farm Machinery

or a group of farmers to assist them in acquiring machinery which they need in order to be more efficient in their operations. I have listened with interest to the debate from the other side of the house and have noted that some hon. members have expressed very grave concern with regard to the principle of this bill. I am happy to note that the speeches today have not been in the same vein. The speeches by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Horner) and the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Bigg), for example, seemed to me completely beside the point when they suggested that legislation which permits farmers voluntarily to co-operate and improve their situation in joining together to purchase machinery is somewhat communistic or socialistic. I am sure no one, on sober reflection of the facts, would really think this is the case. I know that as far back as August 26 the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) pressed the government to bring this legislation before the house. He asked a question, which is reported in *Hansard* at page 7288, as to whether there would be introduced in the house a measure to provide loans to groups of farmers to enable them to purchase farm machinery in the most economical manner. The minister indicated that such a measure was coming forward. The right hon. Leader of the Opposition then said:

So there will be no misunderstanding I say to the minister at once, put this resolution on the order paper and it will receive immediate attention—

I am sure many hon. members are concerned that this legislation should receive immediate attention and should be enacted at the earliest possible date. Last week end I asked a farmer in my riding about this legislation. I have a very high regard for the opinion of this farmer. He is not one of my supporters, but that does not in any way affect the personal friendship which has existed for some time between us. I said to him, "How will this legislation affect you?" His answer was, "I do not think it will really help me very much. Maybe it will help the western farmers." I said, "I am not so much interested in whether it will help western farmers, because they are ably and forcefully represented in the House of Commons. I am more concerned about what it is going to do for the small family farms in the east. Would you use it?" He said, "How could I use it?" I said, "What are you worried about?". We chatted for a while about this and then he said, "I would certainly like to

get a backhoe to take care of the drainage problems on the farm my son is now farming, and my own, in order to deepen the ditches at this time of year. I do not think I will be able to hire enough help to do this".

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that a backhoe is an excellent example of the type of machinery that could be bought by a group of three, four or more farmers. This farmer's son could get together with his neighbours, purchase a backhoe, and they could use it very successfully. This machinery is not used exclusively at harvest time, and they could use it at slack periods. It would certainly help them to improve their operations. I have found in talking to farmers about this legislation—and I have not been talking to them in a partisan way—that they believe they could use it; they felt it was a good thing; they felt it was worth trying.

I realize the problems that have been raised in terms of the possible impairment of credit and the incurring of too much credit, misuse of the credit machinery, and so on. We all know that unwise people can misuse any good legislation or any measure to extend credit; but I am satisfied that the great majority of the farmers in the riding I represent—and it is a fairly substantial rural area—would be happy to see this bill enacted at an early date. For that reason, Mr. Speaker, I am not going to support the amendment.

[Translation]

Mr. Rémi Paul (Berthier-Maskinongé-Delaudaudière): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Choquette: I hope this legislation will be passed faster than the flag resolution.

Mr. Paul: Once again, Mr. Speaker, we hear the echo from Lotbinière. Instead of such an echo we would prefer a contribution by the hon. member to the business of the house. In fact, if he took the time to look at the scope of the bill now before us, I would not be surprised to see him get up, like our hon. friends opposite, and tell us it is an excellent piece of legislation.

On the other hand, after listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Strathcona (Mr. Nugent), we readily come to the conclusion, once again, that the government, through this legislation, is only throwing a bone at the farmers to make them believe that it is concerned with the farm problem in this country although it takes no interest at all and the purpose of this measure, like all legislation introduced by the Minister of