

Farm Credit Act

idea outlined by the minister we will ultimately force more and more family farms out of business.

● (9:00 p.m.)

Mr. Olson: Mr. Chairman, I wonder whether I could help the hon. member.

Mr. Horner: I see that the minister is eager to rise, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Olson: The hon. member for Crowfoot has made the point several times, or has attempted to do so, that this measure will force family farms into a disadvantageous position relative to some other form of entity, whether it be a co-operative or corporation set-up. The fact of the matter is that exactly the opposite is true. If there is a family farm where there is more than one owner-operator, father-son, or father and more than one son, and if there is a partnership or family corporation or co-operative—indeed it does not have to be in that form as long as it is operated as one business, as a family unit—\$100,000 is available to them. It would be \$80,000 if there are two, and \$100,000 if there are three.

All these changes will do will be to recognize every farmer, whether he belongs to a family unit or is in business for himself as having a right, as a bona fide farmer and a citizen of Canada, to apply for \$40,000. He can then organize himself, whether it be in a family unit or some other arrangement, with those around him into operating the most efficient, economic unit. In this way he can take advantage of what my hon. friend has attempted to put forward as an economic disadvantage; that is, he can enter into a corporate arrangement and he would not be denied borrowing up to \$40,000 because he belonged to a larger business than a singly-owned proprietorship type of farm.

Therefore, Mr. Chairman, it is very, very difficult for me to follow the argument of the hon. member, because what he is arguing against, in so far as a family farm is concerned, is actually being provided for in this measure to make it easier and better for family farms and other small groups to in fact take advantage of the efficiency of operating a larger unit.

Mr. Horner: Mr. Chairman, perhaps the minister's definition is quite convincing to those who are not aware of the actual conditions and practical application of the agricultural industry, and what is happening in it.

The minister did not enunciate how the family had to be made up in order to borrow the \$120,000, I think it is, that he mentioned. The minister was referring to a farmer operating a family farm with sons of 21 years of age or 18 years of age. He did not in any way refer to a farmer who has daughters.

Mr. Olson: Mr. Chairman, I think the hon. member would agree that they are not partners until they become of age, whether it be 18 years of age or 21 years of age.

Mr. Horner: Now the minister has put the picture very, very clearly. Supposing there are one, two or three brothers farming together, and a piece of land is for sale, and supposing also that a family operating a very efficient unit has children who are not 18 years of age or 19 years of age—they may be 6, 7, or 8 years of age; perhaps there are a few young farmers still in this country who have been brave enough in the last few years to try to establish a farm—I ask, who will be able to buy the piece of land available for sale in the neighbourhood?

Under the provisions of this bill, those able to buy the land will be the established, two, three or four brothers farming together who have formed a company. Perhaps two or three of the brothers are still in the city or have gone back to the towns and are doctors, or what have you; but they are considered to be farmers because they were able to borrow the money. The minister did not say they have to live on the farm, but as long as they are operating the farm—perhaps drive out at week ends to supervise it—they are eligible to take advantage of this bill.

Mr. Olson: The act says "principal occupation".

Mr. Horner: That is a difficult one to determine, Mr. Chairman. "Principal occupation" is a very difficult term to define.

An hon. Member: It is defined all the time.

Mr. Horner: Now we have the learned expert entering the debate. I wish that more of the backbenchers on the other side of the house would enter this debate, because we would benefit so much from the knowledge that they are sitting on. "Principal occupation" does not give a clear definition as to his degree of occupation in that field. It depends upon whether he is actively engaged in the agricultural industry. He might be an auctioneer making far more than the earnings of his farm.