

Farm Credit Act

Some hon. Members: Yes.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the no as well as I did.

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• (1530)

FARM CREDIT ACT**AMENDMENTS RESPECTING LOANS AND POWERS AND CAPITAL OF CORPORATION**

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-5, to amend the Farm Credit Act, as reported (without amendment) from the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The discussions and conferences taking place should be held outside the curtains so that we may proceed with the work of the House.

I should point out that motion No. 1 would appear to be acceptable on procedural grounds. Motion No. 2 would appear to be defective in that it would seem to insert a financial provision in the main act that is not covered in the bill that is before the House. Of course, hon. members will be given the opportunity to offer their advice to the Chair on the procedural aspects of this motion.

Section 23 of the main act relates to the making of regulations with respect to the Farm Credit Act. However, it might be better if we do not go into this aspect of the matter now, and instead proceeded with motion No. 1. Whenever we reach motion No. 2 the Chair will hear hon. members on the procedural aspects of the motion.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to move motion No. 1 on behalf of the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). I would point out, however, that because of the arrangements that were made, assuming we would be proceeding with the other bill hon. members who are keenly interested in this bill are presently involved in committee proceedings. We hope they will be here for the purpose of debating this motion, but at the moment I am prepared to move it on behalf of the hon. member.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Baldwin, for Mr. Mazankowski, seconded by Mr. Hees, moves motion No. 1 as follows:

That Bill C-5, an act to amend the Farm Credit Act, be amended by deleting lines 8 to 15 on page 1 thereof and by substituting therefor the following:

"(1.1) The corporation has all the powers necessary to carry out such duties or functions in relation to the administration of any agricultural program as is assigned to it pursuant to any other act of the Parliament of Canada."

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. R. E. McKinley (Huron): Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to make a statement of any kind on this bill?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, without repeating the substance of the argument that took place on an amendment which, if not identical certainly was similar to this one in its substantive parts, was moved in committee I would

[Mr. Speaker.]

point out that such an amendment was defeated in committee.

Mr. McKinley: Mr. Speaker, at this short notice, not anticipating that the bill would come up until tomorrow, I would like to attempt to explain what this motion means. Clause 1 of the bill really does not have much to do with the Farm Credit Act as such, but simply gives the governor in council any authority necessary to carry out any provisions it may wish to have carried out with respect to the small farm development program announced by the government more than a year ago.

During the committee hearings we received representations from two provincial ministers of agriculture and from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and the National Farmers Union. All these representations expressed reservations at Parliament handing the government the type of power provided in clause 1 of the bill. They contended that it was not necessary for the Farm Credit Corporation to carry out additional duties as provided in this bill through amendments to the Farm Credit Act.

The amending bill increases the amount that an individual borrower may obtain from \$40,000 to \$100,000. We do not quarrel with that. Many farmers are waiting for this bill to be passed so they can make use of the additional funds available and we do not quarrel with the increase in the ceiling to \$100,000. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture told the committee it would like to see the ceiling raised to \$250,000.

We contend that it is entirely unnecessary to put in clause 1 sweeping power to carry into effect the small farm development program, particularly when the minister and his officials are unable to give us any indication of how that program will be carried out and which farmers will be eligible. The federal government has been negotiating with the provinces in an endeavour to reach agreement on the provincial departments of agriculture supplying all the personnel to administer the program. I point out that many of the provinces already have their own programs. Ontario makes very effective use of the ARDA program, the cost of which is shared 50 per cent by the province and 50 per cent by the federal government, and the administration is carried out by the province. Ontario has some concern that the small farms development program put on top of ARDA will mean a considerable mix-up.

Some of the western provinces have also initiated their own programs, and they have been completely unable to come to agreement with the federal government on the authority that clause 1 of the bill would give to the Farm Credit Corporation. Those are the principal reasons this motion has been moved, that is, to prevent giving the governor in council a great deal of power when it does not yet know what use will be made of it.

• (1540)

We feel that when the small farm development program is spelled out to Parliament, hon. members might be willing to go along with this additional power. However, we do not think the power should be granted without further