

*Farm Improvement Loans Act*

inefficient occupations in this country, and I was very pleased that the minister made these comments.

I also wish to congratulate the minister for organizing the tour of Canada by agriculturalists from the Soviet union. In my opinion this type of association and exchange of ideas between those interested in agriculture in both countries can be most fruitful in the development of friendship between our country and the Soviet union. I have talked to some of those who were on the tour, and I am sure the visit of these Soviet agriculturalists was very worth while indeed. I think it was mutually beneficial and enjoyable.

I compliment the minister particularly as one who comes from a family that believes in free enterprise from here to eternity, because we recognize that he has done a good job in inviting these representatives from a socialist country to look at Canadian agriculture. I hope there was a bit of mellowing on both sides. Possibly we could learn something from them and they could learn something from our way of doing things. I think this is a very good way indeed to develop understanding between two very important groups in the economics of both countries.

I want to say a word or two with respect to the resolution stage of legislation. Years ago there used to be a debate on the resolution before the Speaker left the chair. Then we had the resolution, second reading, committee of the whole and so on. There is a move now to do away with the resolution stage on money bills. I can well understand this, but if the resolution stage were used for the purpose for which it was originally intended it could be a most useful stage in discussion.

I understand that the original purpose of the resolution stage before the introduction of the legislation was so that members on the opposition side could express their views, make observations regarding the circumstances surrounding the legislation, and offer suggestions; and that any wise government would listen to the views expressed by the opposition and after listening to them would very often make changes in the legislation before bringing in the measure. If the resolution stage was used for that purpose and governments did not finally draft their legislation—it would not apply in simple matters, but would in complicated circumstances—until after the debate on the resolution stage had terminated, the government could amend its legislation to take advantage of the views of the opposition without any loss of face, and the country as a whole would benefit. I sug-

[Mr. Herridge.]

gest that consideration be given to that aspect of the resolution stage. Otherwise there is no great value in the debate on the resolution stage unless it is intended, as I said, to have some effect on the government in the drafting of the legislation.

Let me say that we welcome this legislation, which is urgently required at this time to meet the growing need for this type of credit in this field. I have had some experience in this respect. In travelling around I talk to our farmers and discuss their requirements, and I realize there has been a growing need for the amendment proposed in the legislation.

I might also say that we support this type of legislation wholeheartedly because it is right in line with our philosophy and program, which is based on a mixed economy. This involves legitimate private ownership operating in co-operation with government as the result of social capital being invested in our agricultural economy, and still leaving to the individual the opportunity for ownership of the farm, the making of management decisions and so on.

As far as I can ascertain, during the past 150 years our national agricultural policy has had one primary objective, namely the establishment of a rural economy in which independent farmers had complete ownership and control of the land they farmed. As a result the family farm has been the principal type of productive unit in Canadian agriculture to date. However, changing circumstances as the result of our industrial development have aroused widespread concern with regard to the present position of the family farm in Canadian agriculture. The increasing apprehension over the apparently precarious position of the family farm, particularly in some areas of Canada, is somewhat similar to the feeling of insecurity that exists in small business operations, some small industries and other aspects of our economy across Canada.

What is a family farm? In my opinion a family farm is a farm where, first, the farm owner or operator makes all the management decisions; second, where the farmer and the members of his family supply most of the labour required except at seeding and harvest times; and third, where the available farm resources and markets are sufficient to provide the family with an adequate standard of living. That is a family farm.

I might say I also believe in what I term the maintenance farm, because I think it has a role to play in our agricultural economy. Statistics do not always tell the whole story.