

Farm Machinery

and a Liberal administration in Quebec, and our agriculture keeps deteriorating.

An hon. Member: How were things under a Conservative administration?

Mr. Boutin: When we had a Conservative administration in Quebec as well as in Ottawa, it was no better, but we find that things are even worse now that there are Liberals at both places.

Mr. Grégoire: It is true.

Mr. Boutin: Mr. Speaker, I should like to mention here a formal promise made by the Liberal party, through the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette), namely that if the Liberal party were elected there would be a minister of agriculture for eastern Canada. Many farmers were trapped and voted for the Liberal party in the hope that it would set up a department of agriculture for eastern Canada. Today we know the disappointment of farmers, indeed the disappointment of farmers in the county of Lotbinière.

Mr. Speaker, there is what I would call a western thinking on legislation introduced here, and I wonder if the best solution would not be to let Quebec look after its own agriculture. Some perhaps will shout "separatism" but I am not a separatist.

Because of its special agriculture, of the diversity of its soil, of its products and crops, why would the province of Quebec itself, and only itself, not look after its agriculture? Then the federal government might leave the administration of agriculture to the province of Quebec, since there is a complete lack of co-operation between both departments of agriculture? The provincial government does not want to ask the federal government and the federal government does not want to give to the provincial government. We always meet with difficulties. Would it not be better if the provincial government would look only after its agriculture and the federal government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member will allow me to interrupt for a moment in order to remind him that the bill before the house is Bill No. C-121, an act to provide for the extension of credit to farm machinery syndicates. Consequently, I would suggest that he limits his remarks to the principle of the bill.

Mr. Boutin: Mr. Speaker, if you limit me to the principle of the bill, I shall be through with my remarks, since I see in it nothing

[Mr. Boutin.]

good or special to assist the farmers in the province of Quebec. And I should state that even if I am not in favour of this bill, I shall support it.

An hon. Member: Be consistent with yourself.

Mr. Boutin: In two or three years it may be seen whether this bill was really favourable to the farmers of the province of Quebec, whether there has been an increase in profits for our farmers. Then our farmers may answer yes or no to the bill presently before us.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe, as I was saying a while ago, that to get the farmers even more into debt is a solution to get them out of the depression in which they presently stagnate.

I believe it would be preferable to find outlets for the products of our farmers in the province of Quebec instead of getting them even more into the red, as the Liberal government took pleasure in doing since it came into office.

[Text]

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I regret very much the statements the previous speaker made, with what is definitely a provincial and parochial attitude. I am not a farmer; I do not represent a farming constituency; but as a member of the House of Commons I have a great interest in, and I hope a knowledge of, the problems of farmers whether they be from western Canada, eastern Canada, from British Columbia or Quebec. A bill which is aimed at assisting many of the farmers of Canada, irrespective of the province in which they reside and operate, is most certainly worthy of the favourable consideration of this house.

In principle, sir, I am in support of the bill that is now before us, because it is an endeavour to meet one of the big problems of farmers in their operations in what is now an automated age. Automation hits farmers as well as industry. I am also in favour of the amendment which has been moved to have this entire question referred to the agriculture committee. It is basically on the amendment, in accordance with the rules, that I desire to speak.

Mr. Speaker, anyone who knows Canada and the problems of agriculture, the cost of machinery, the inability of an individual farmer to get machinery on his own, must know that in principle the bill introduced by the government is a step in the right direction; even if, as one hon. member a few days ago