

*Farm Improvement Loans Act*

have felt that because of the recent about-face in connection with interest rates on the part of the minister we could not give him *carte blanche* in the absence of certain assurances. I tried to get an assurance from the Minister of Finance the other day, but I failed to draw him out. In the absence of any assurance from the minister or his colleague we felt we were obliged to place a ceiling on the amount which could be charged. We drew up this amendment carefully, bearing in mind that the ceiling ought to be set high enough to encourage the banks and other lending institutions to make loans to farmers.

● (8:40 p.m.)

I hope the minister will not take recourse to defensive arguments or points of order regarding the validity of the amendment. I hope he will deal with the question we have raised. As I say, if the interest rate he contemplates is lower than the one we suggest I shall be quick to withdraw the amendment and support the clause under review.

**Mr. Olson:** I wish to say that this amendment is unacceptable for a number of reasons. First of all, it would change the concept of having a prescribed rate, so that we could make arrangements with the banks and other institutions under which there would be maximum availability of credit to the people who want to use it.

Then there is the ambiguity as to what "short term" means. Does it mean 90-day treasury bills? Does it mean 180-day treasury bills? Does it relate to bonds which have been issued? The hon. member for Crowfoot knows very well that if he means 90-day treasury bill—

**Mr. Horner:** I should like to tell the minister I specifically referred to 180-day government bills. I referred specifically to these, and I believe I was speaking loudly enough for him to hear.

**Mr. Olson:** Well, with all respect to the intention of the hon. member, that is not what the amendment says. The amendment uses the phrase "short term" and we have no way of getting the hon. member's interpretation printed into the act, unless he puts down those words himself; and he has not done that.

**Mr. Horner:** Is the minister speaking on a point of order or is he making a reply to the speeches made on the amendment?

**Mr. Olson:** We are not questioning the good order—

**Mr. Horner:** Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I was not addressing the minister; I was addressing the Chair. Is the hon. gentleman speaking on a point of order or is he discussing the amendment itself?

**The Deputy Chairman:** I think the Chair should put the amendment, first, and then the Minister of Agriculture can take the floor. I might point out that the amendment contains a reference to the word "at". There is no "at" in line 42, but there is one at the end of line 41.

**Mr. Olson:** As I was saying, regardless of whether or not we can spell out the meaning of "short term" with enough precision, the government takes the position that we need a prescribed rate of simple interest, and that the amendment is therefore unacceptable.

I should like to say one or two words about the very long speech the hon. member made about the treasury branches in Alberta. I wonder whether he could take his tongue out of his cheek long enough to admit that he did not really mean what he was saying. The government of Alberta does not need any guarantee from the federal government of the nature referred to. It was just a red herring in the first place.

**Mr. Horner:** On a point of order. The hon. minister has imputed motives to me. I was not speaking with my tongue in my cheek. I was speaking with as much sincerity as anyone can address to this important subject. The minister can snigger all he likes. The government of Alberta asked for guarantees from the federal government in respect to crop insurance. I think my question was a legitimate one and the hon. gentleman should withdraw his suggestion.

**Mr. Olson:** There is no point of order involved there.

**Mr. Horner:** There certainly is. The minister imputed motives.

**Mr. Olson:** Well, if the remarks I made were offensive to the hon. member for Crowfoot I should like to withdraw them. Anyway, he tried to make a case out of the fact that we were not guaranteeing loans made by the provincial governments. He knows that neither Alberta nor any of the other provinces would want the federal government to take action which would affect their treasury