

Farm Credit Act

I see my good friend, the hon. member for Argenteuil-Deux-Montagnes (Mr. Drouin) who was shouting himself hoarse at the time promising everything to the right and to the left, roaming through the various ridings and acting up behind the micro and on the television screen—

Mr. Drouin: Mr. Speaker, may I point out to the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot that if he sat down, he would become minister of agriculture for the east sooner.

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, if I understood him rightly, the hon. member said that if I tried, we would probably have one sooner.

Mr. Paul: He said: "If you sat down".

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, I am certain that if a Conservative government made such a promise, it would be kept to the last dot.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Kings also whined and said that we did not do enough when we were in power, i.e. from 1958 to 1963.

Mr. Speaker, it must be admitted that it was impossible to remedy, within a period of six years, the negligence of the Liberal party which had been in office for 22 years and held the eastern as well as the western farmers, at its mercy.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is a well-known fact that, when we assumed office, there was a wheat surplus for which we were not responsible. Yet, we tackled the problem under the leadership of the hon. member for Qu'Appelle (Mr. Hamilton) who proved his great ability as a salesman and a farmer, and we also succeeded in eliminating this wheat surplus, which was a very welcome action.

Mr. Speaker, since you were in the house at that time, you are no doubt aware that when the hon. member for Qu'Appelle introduced the so-called ARDA in the house, all the members of the Conservative party, including the hon. member for Qu'Appelle, were laughed at by the Liberal party. However, today, the Liberal members, having as their special ambassador the hon. member for Îles-des-la-Madeleine (Mr. Sauvé), whom I congratulate for his work, travel throughout the country praising the merits and advantages of ARDA, saying that the future of agriculture rests on it.

We now hear a different tune, and it would have been so easy then for the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Béchard) to sing the praise of ARDA instead of running it down as he did at the time. In fact, if he and his colleagues of the province of Quebec had

simply agreed to give the Conservative government a chance, if they had brought pressure to bear on the members of other governments, such as the Lesage government, for instance, to assume half of the responsibilities and co-operate with the planning in that direction, we would certainly have seen right away the results and the benefits of ARDA.

But in that field as in the others, Mr. Speaker, you cannot separate the Liberals. They always use the same tactics. They only have one objective and it is to get into office. And once they are in they have to burn what they worshipped and worship what they burned.

For the information of the hon. member for Kings and for other government members who might be inclined to think that the Conservative party did nothing for the farming class when it was in power, I would suggest that they refer to page 19 of the pamphlet published by the Farm Credit Corporation and to compare the loans made during the 22 years of Liberal regime with those made during the six years when the Conservative party was in power. They will notice that during the six years of our administration, we accommodated about the same number of farmers as the Liberals did in 22 years.

As a matter of fact, they granted loans to some 35,000 farmers, while during six years of Conservative administration—and I add the figures rapidly—34,854 farmers received loans from the Farm Credit Corporation. Under the Liberal regime, the money made available to the farmers amounted to some \$112 million, while it went up to over \$283 million during the six years of Conservative administration.

But those statistics do not keep government members from repeating, every time they can, that nothing was done by the Conservative party for the farming class.

I also wish to make a comparison between what was done under both governments in my riding. Before 1958, only six loans were granted by the Farm Credit Corporation, for a total amount of \$37,400. On the other hand, for the years 1958 to 1963-64 inclusive, 114 loans were granted to farmers in my riding, for a total amount of \$1,823,500.

Those are figures and comparisons which will certainly cause some meditation among government members of good faith. I know that there are some and I see my hon. friend from Champlain (Mr. Matte), for instance, as well as my good friend from Chambly-Rouville (Mr. Pilon) and many others whom