

Farm Credit Act

Mr. Belzile: Yes.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Belzile: Mr. Chairman, let us say that the hon. member has been given enough opportunities to interrupt me.

Naturally, Mr. Chairman, I can see that my hon. friend might not be pleased with this, because I must admit in all humility that I may not have enough competence to deal with the matter under study, for I am not a notary, or a lawyer. I am just a farmer, I can see that very well.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to quote without any malice—I am a good chap, you know—extracts from a speech delivered by my neighbour, the member for Bonaventure (Mr. Bechard), in the course of the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne.

As shown at page 408 of *Hansard*, he stated:

According to experts, we have perhaps in the Gaspé peninsula the best climate in Canada for general farming.

Mr. Chairman, I like to think that the hon. member for Bonaventure has called forth the opinion of experts to declare here in the house that we have in the Gaspé peninsula the best climate in Canada. Like the member for Bonaventure, I am from the Gaspé peninsula and it is precisely for that reason that I am sure that he did not express his own opinion, because if we ask experts to tell us the real value of an acre of land, the last technician in agriculture will be able to do so.

First he will take into consideration the natural value of the soil, that is whether it is a flat or rolling land, a stony or sandy soil, an alluvial tract of land or a clay soil, etc. He will also consider its potassium, phosphoric acid and nitrogen contents. After that he will be in a position to say: This land is worth \$100 an acre and such another worth \$50 an acre.

On the other hand, if I ask the same expert to tell me the difference between the same value based on the climate of the Gaspé peninsula and that based on the climate in the St. Hyacinthe region, or the Montreal region or the Niagara valley, I think that the man is not yet born who could give me sound figures in this respect.

Mr. Chairman, when one thinks that by the end of April or the beginning of May farmers

[Mr. Drouin.]

are in their fields in the St. Hyacinthe or Montreal regions, sowing their grain, and that their cattle are out on pasture, while we, in the Gaspé peninsula, are still feeding our cows and walking in the snow; when one considers that the grazing season in the Gaspé peninsula only lasts a month or two, that during two short months only—with such periods being sometimes shortened at both ends—our cattle can actually find grazing grounds, one can certainly not make any comparison between the climate of the Gaspé peninsula and that of those districts. Furthermore, when one considers that in the Montreal and other areas I mentioned earlier cattle are turned out to pasture in May, June, July, August, September, October, and in some years until early November, one cannot say that the climate of the Gaspé peninsula is favourable.

Mr. Chairman, if I set the record straight, it was so that this house may understand that as far as climate is concerned the Gaspé farmers are entirely destitute compared with the farmers in the western parts of the province or those in other sections of the country.

Now, Mr. Chairman, to come back to the speech of the hon. member for Bonaventure, he said:

A man is a farmer or a lumberjack. He cannot and must not be both at the same time, if he wants to succeed in one field or the other.

This time, Mr. Chairman, I agree with my hon. friend. And this makes me think of the old saying my grandmother used to quote, and which says: "If you run after two hares at once, you have a good chance to catch neither." That is true, one cannot be at the same time a farmer and a lumberjack. If a survey was made among the farmers who succeeded in life, 95 or even 99 per cent would tell us that they lived on their farms, which they operated for 12 months of the year.

Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for Bonaventure made a most interesting speech, because I am always coming back to it, and I say so without any malice.

A little further he said:

We are making the same mistake again in the field of agriculture, we are putting the cart before the horse. Allow me to explain. The Canadian government is much more favourable to the granting of loans when they are used for the purchase of machinery and equipment than when they are used to improve the land.