

*Farm Machinery*

spirit of the province of Quebec or, perhaps I should say, that of eastern Canada's farmers.

I quite understand that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hays), being a member for a western constituency should be inclined to think and act as a man from the west; in short, he attempts to legislate in terms of agriculture in western Canada.

It is obvious that Bill No. C-121 will do no good to the agriculture of eastern Canada.

As pointed out by the member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière (Mr. Paul) a little while ago, this measure is just an attempt to eliminate family farms in eastern Canada. So we ask ourselves whether the federal Minister of Agriculture has not been advised by the minister of agriculture of the province of Quebec to the effect that 35,000 farmers in the province of Quebec should, within a few years, leave their farms in order to make room for larger units and, to this end, 35,000 farmers must abandon their farms so as to permit others to buy, enlarge and transform them into some kind of collective farms.

What I find strange in this bill is that in the second paragraph, for instance, we read:

Where an individual has two or more major occupations, one of which is farming, the corporation may determine which of such occupations is his principal occupation for the purposes of this act.

There lies the danger. Anybody will be able to start farming knowing that if he declares that his main occupation is agriculture—even if he has another one—it will be sufficient to own a small farm to be declared a farmer, in short to be known as a person engaged in agriculture. So anybody will be able to avail himself of Bill No. C-121 to borrow from the federal Department of Agriculture or from the Farm Credit Corporation.

Under the circumstances, I do not think that this bill will prove useful to the farmers of the province of Quebec, because in that province agriculture is quite different from that in western Canada. I would be inclined to say that this legislation would be more appropriate to the western farmers, because they can join together to purchase heavy machinery, in view of the great size of their farms.

In that part of the country farming is not at all like that in the east where we have diversified agriculture. Moreover, the soil itself is more diversified. Our products are also much too diversified for farmers to take advantage of this legislation and purchase heavy machinery.

All production is not diversified. There is wheat, for instance, which may extend all over a province. The same is true for other crops. But it cannot apply in the province of Quebec, because we have too great a diversity of soil, products and crops. Therefore, I say that the legislation now before us does not apply at all to the province of Quebec, and will only push our farmers further into debt. We know that more than 98 per cent of our lands in the province of Quebec, are owned or operated under farm credit. How can our farmers get out of this economic depression in which they are today? Getting deeper into debt will hardly solve the problem.

We know that between 1940 and 1964, the prices of farm products remained practically the same, whereas during the same period, the prices for machinery or other equipment used for production has trebled. Do you think, Mr. Speaker, that it is possible to make a profit when prices remain the same while the cost of machinery trebles?

Mr. Speaker, even if the purchase of machinery were made easier, and the farmers were authorized to go to Ottawa, or Quebec, for the money required to buy equipment and machinery, while the government did nothing to market our farm production, I hardly think it would help our eastern farmers.

Mr. Speaker, there is an obvious lack of co-operation between the federal and the provincial departments of agriculture. In Ottawa, there is a certain partiality towards the agriculture of western provinces. If western farmers produce wheat or anything at all, they can count on the required sympathy of the federal Minister of Agriculture to market their production; if the minister does not succeed in disposing of all their wheat, he will pay them a subsidy even if there is a crop failure because of drought, rain, grasshoppers, etc. And what is done for the farmer in the province of Quebec when he has a crop failure? The Quebec department of agriculture is blamed for it. Yes, I find that there is a lack of co-operation between the department of agriculture of the province of Quebec and the federal department in Ottawa to assist the farmers in the province of Quebec. But I wonder whether that was the policy advocated by Hon. Jean Lesage when, two days before the 1963 election, he told the people of Quebec: "Vote Liberal in Ottawa and things will go well with a Liberal government in Quebec." We now have a Liberal administration in Ottawa