

Farm Credit Act

to me that this can be offensive from the Indian point of view. Whether a band consists of 50 members, 1,000 members or 5,000 members the minister has arbitrarily set a figure that can only mean there will be hardship. There can be no question about that because he has stated that a band can get only \$100,000. Yet at the same time he says the government is trying to treat Indians just the same as anyone else. It cannot treat Indians the same as anyone else when it includes a provision like this stipulating that a band is entitled to only \$100,000. If he wants to treat the Indian with some respect and appreciate his dignity I plead with the minister to consider the subamendment and the amendment.

If the minister accepts them he will be able to take cognizance of a band consisting of 1,000 people. I am not too well aware of the number of men, women and children that usually form a band, but does the minister not realize that when he stipulates \$100,000 he is restricting whatever good this legislation may achieve? I plead with the minister to appreciate the fact that we are dealing with people. He is talking about corporate entities, partnerships and associations. We are dealing with people.

If we are going to move toward the just society, here is an ideal opportunity for parliament, and particularly the government, to be just. Let us recognize that a band can consist of 2,000 people. If we do not recognize that fact then I say this new section smacks of discrimination. It is offensive, and we do not want that record in the first session of this parliament. I ask Liberal backbenchers to pay particular attention to these amendments that are attempting to show there is discrimination. There is discrimination because the bill now says it does not matter how many people are in a band, and no matter what their capital projects are they can get only \$100,000. I plead with the minister, let us not be offensive in new subsection 4. Let us be interested in seeing to it that this measure does have some merit.

Mr. Olson: There is no offensiveness in this bill at all. I would remind the hon. gentleman that what we are doing for the Indian farmers, and indeed for bands where farming is undertaken, is exactly the same as what we are doing for anyone else. For a corporation of people who are Canadian citizens other than Indians, if the corporation consists of 100, 500 or 1,000 members the limit it could get would also be \$100,000.

[Mr. Alexander.]

Mr. Gleave: Did the minister consult with any of the Indian associations before this proposal was drawn up and ask them how they wanted to approach the matter?

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Olson: What we are doing here, Mr. Chairman, is providing precisely the same provision for Indians as anyone else in the country. There is no special consideration for them but there is certainly nothing less than equal consideration.

Mr. Gleave: This is not an answer to my question. I am not thinking in terms of equality. I am simply asking whether the minister consulted with members or officials of Indian associations before this proposal was drafted?

Mr. Olson: I am advised that there has been consultation with the department of Indian affairs and officers of the Farm Credit Corporation have been on a number of reserves to make appraisals and assessments.

Mr. Gleave: I know that consultations have taken place with the department of Indian affairs. I would expect that representatives of the corporation had been on reserves. I am asking, was there consultation with any of the Indian associations?

Mr. Olson: Not with the Minister of Agriculture. I fail to see the purport of this question because what we are doing here does not make any special provision for Indians separately from any other citizen. What we are doing here is to write legislation to make available to Indians who are farmers precisely the same services as anyone else.

Mr. Gleave: My question was whether consultations had been had with Indian associations. The purport of my question was to ascertain whether the Indians had agreed to this particular procedure. I would assume that quite possibly it was in line with what these people wanted. However, their circumstances are different from mine, for example, as a farmer. I own land in individual right, but in the case of Indian bands the security would not be land as such but would be a different type of security. Surely this is a factual difference and it is the reason I asked the question to ascertain if there had been consultations and if the Indian people considered this provision was what they wanted.

Mr. Harding: Could I put a question to the minister concerning something which is puzzling to me? For example, I understand that