

Farm Credit Act

is given to the ability, the efficiency and the good will of those who wish to take up farming. Often well-meaning people would make excellent farmers, but they belong to large families and they do not have the necessary means to buy the smallest farm. In such cases, I think, that it would be advisable to consult the local authorities in order to inquire about the solvency and especially the desire of the young man to meet his obligations.

I would also like to recommend to the minister to make clear what the rate of interest would be. It is a known fact that farm loans are already available in the province of Quebec at a rate of interest of only 2½ per cent. This is surely a great help to farmers and the very small losses suffered by the provincial farm loan board prove beyond doubt that the person who established that agency in the province of Quebec and who was so strongly criticized by my hon. friends opposite, namely the late Maurice Duplessis, rendered great services not only to the farmers but also to the province in providing the required credit facilities to this segment of the population.

I would like the minister to consider the possibility of reducing if possible or at least of restricting to 5 per cent the interest rate on farm loans.

I should also like to ask the minister whether it would not be possible for the borrower to select his own notary instead of dealing with a notary who is designated to him by the corporation.

It is a well-known fact that among French Canadian families, businesses are transferred from fathers to sons at a particular notary office. It has become a custom among our people to do their transactions at the same office in order to facilitate research and also to eliminate expenses which can sometimes be burdensome, if a notary other than the one who is used to look after the business of the family is appointed to do the necessary work when a young farmer makes an application for a loan from the Canadian Farm Credit Corporation.

Once more, I heard tonight the hon. member for Kings pay tribute to the present Minister of Agriculture and praise the farm policy of the Liberal party. I would not like to seem unpleasant at all toward my friend, the Minister of Agriculture, but the flattering words which were uttered about him by my colleague from Kings compel me to set the record straight because according to the hon.

[Mr. Ricard.]

member, we would be ready to confer sainthood on the Minister of Agriculture.

However, I would like to put on the record an appraisal of the Minister of Agriculture made by the editor of *La Terre de Chez Nous*, the mouth-piece of farmers—if I may say so—in the issue of May 27, 1964, through Mr. Paul Henri Lavoie. Here is what Mr. Lavoie thinks of the present Minister of Agriculture, and I quote:

Mr. Harry Hays does not have to deal so much with the problem of agriculture in his area, namely that of western Canada, because there is none or practically none. Especially when we consider the great sales of wheat made in the recent months and the prospects for the coming year.

What strikes me particularly is the following sentence:

We are under the impression that he does not know anything about eastern agriculture and that he is not at all interested therein. Yet, he is the one who makes decisions and this is already very serious.

That is quite another story that I deemed it my duty to recall so as to show both sides of the question. The hon. member for Kings also mentioned all the blessings bestowed by his party ever since it came to power. However, I should like to point out that since the minister has taken over the agriculture portfolio, the income of farmers in the province of Quebec has decreased.

The first step was to abolish the 25 cent per cwt. subsidy on milk, which resulted in a saving—according to the minister's own figures—of about \$11 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if this new measure, made possible a saving of \$11 million, a sum which was previously paid to farmers, well, I wonder if it is not from the farmers' pockets that this amount was extracted. If the hon. member for Kings considers this has been a blessing for the farmers, he has a peculiar idea of the interest we should show them.

I would also like to remind the hon. member for Kings, as well as the other members, and especially those of the province of Quebec, that in the programs presented during the election campaigns of 1962-63, the Liberal party had promised a minister of agriculture for eastern Canada. Where is this minister of agriculture for eastern Canada? Is this not another promise which was broken by the federal Liberal party? I urge those members to exert pressure in order to secure such an appointment, because during the campaign in our Quebec areas the appointment of a minister of agriculture for eastern Canada was promised.