

Farm Machinery

of it, because he is an authority on following those who read speeches in the House of Commons. The Minister of Agriculture said this:

This is something brand new in Canadian agriculture. It is an experimental type of legislation and we will be ready to make whatever changes in its operation experience indicates.

Well, the minister can come into my riding at any time he wishes and tell the Mennonite people of my riding that this is a new departure. I recall when these people first came to Canada, with very few assets apart from their willingness to work hard to try to become a part of this nation. At that time they engaged in a good many co-operative activities—the pooling of machinery, the pooling of land on occasions, and similar arrangements. Over the years these people, who have proven to be some of the best farmers in Canada, have come to the realization that they get along much better by branching out on their own as individuals in order to build up farm enterprises and a place in the community. Having said this, I know there are many people who are in a limited way sharing in the cost of farm machinery today. But when I look at this bill and at the measures we already have on the statute books I cannot understand how a minister of agriculture who is trying to assume the role of the farmers' friend could bring into this house a measure providing for interest rates such as will be charged under these arrangements, as well as giving rise to the delays which must necessarily occur as a result of the exhaustive study which members of the Farm Credit Corporation must make in assessing the creditworthiness of each application. I cannot understand the minister doing this when all that is required is a simple amendment to the Farm Improvement Loans Act which would provide for the type of operation now contemplated.

Last night the minister said there was a demand that he should bring forward this legislation. Then he proudly said "We have brought it in" or "I have brought it in". But I ask the minister whether this is the type of legislation he promised the farmers of this country during the last several months. It is not, as I understand the statements made by the minister from one end of this nation to the other. Indeed, sir, if I recall correctly he started out by promising the farmers of this country some sort of rental arrangement under which they might secure farm machinery at rates conducive to the use of machinery on that basis. This measure, if it is anything, is a duplication of various other

acts that are now on the statute books, acts that could have served the purpose just as well by a very simple amendment thereto. When we consider the bill itself and look at the financial provisions under clause 7, I would say that I never saw so much window dressing in all my life. I believe that if you look at the Financial Administration Act you will find almost word for word everything that is written into clauses 7 and 8 of this bill. If you go on to clause 11 you find something that is written into the present Farm Credit Corporation Act almost word for word.

We on this side of the house have certainly asked ourselves why the government has taken this very difficult way of implementing the desire that we believe is in the minds of all members of the House of Commons, namely to provide credit on a more comprehensive basis for all those who may need it. I recall the election propaganda issued during the last two election campaigns. On September 22, as reported at page 8313 of *Hansard*, I made some reference to this when I said:

This pamphlet sets forth the basic problem. It is stated that the basic farm problem is the cost-price squeeze on the farmer's income. This is an important thing to remember when we are considering this bill, which is to provide credit for the purchase of farm machinery by syndicates. The other point that should be raised at this time, Mr. Speaker, is the fact that this bill provides for setting aside \$25 million for the purposes embodied in the bill.

I compared that with the estimates of the Department of Agriculture, which total some \$140 million. I went on to say:

This bill does not lower the price of farm machinery. When one considers that \$25 million is being set aside by this measure, and when one thinks of all the other things that could be done for farm people—

And so on. That is one of the questions that we have to concern ourselves with here today. I believe it is not too late for the minister to give some consideration to making the provisions of this legislation part of the Farm Improvement Loans Act, thus eliminating the high cost farm people will be faced with in respect of this particular measure. If the minister does not do that, there is only one conclusion to which I can come, namely that this is one of those pieces of legislation that is comparable to the Gordon budget, that first budget, that abortive budget; it is comparable to the Canada pension plan, which wasted so many hours of the time of the House of Commons and today is still not before us in a concrete form in which we can deal with that particular