

Farm Credit Act

about—I wonder whether the government could not keep this amount and pay it back after the loan has been retired.

Someone said yesterday that to have a fairly well organized farm, a farmer needs at least \$25,000. If you work out the farmer's average income, after he has paid interest on that amount, he has absolutely nothing left to live on, because he has to pay out three quarters of his income on interest alone.

A study of the statistics mentioned in the report indicates that formerly the farm was being mortgaged. The farmer was thus in a strait-jacket. Today, through the banks, all his farm machinery is mortgaged.

If the question is considered seriously, it is realized that we shall certainly have to review the situation, since the farmer gets almost nothing from the sale of his products.

It is also known that many farmers buy farm machinery of a cheap finish—what could be called a scrap-heap—for which they are charged \$3,000 or \$4,000, and besides that farmers are allowed to mortgage their possessions at the bank, to finally be able to pay for years supplementary interests, when they already paid too much for those farm machines.

Mr. Chairman, farm credit is certainly a good thing. My father got a loan for his farm more than 20 years ago. He is dead now and the only thing he left to his son, my brother, is the farm loan that my brother keeps on paying, with interest. Honestly, what an estate.

Today, they find we do not have enough of it. They want to enslave others still more. Indeed we do what is most urgent first. It is true that the situation is serious, but we must admit, for instance, that Quebec farmers, those in my riding as well as elsewhere, never enjoyed the same treatment as those in the west. They never had guaranteed prices for instance.

I hope my good friends from the west will not hold this remark against me because it must be recognized that when we have talked about agriculture in Canada, we have always talked about subsidies for wheat. As far as the eastern farmers are concerned, they do not remember ever getting any.

Consequently, we must remember that the eastern farmers are still a part of Canada, as much as the western farmers, and, in the

future, they should be treated exactly the same way. We can claim that right because we are worth as much as the farmers in the other parts of the country.

Mr. Chairman, I was brought up in the Gaspé peninsula, just like my hon. friend. I lived in his riding and, if I were still there, I do not know if I would vote for him. I know the hard life these people have and, frankly, I am of the opinion that this situation should have been studied sooner.

I hope that we, in the province of Quebec, will have also the pleasure of seeing the Minister of Agriculture. Frankly, if I had not come to the house, I think I would never have known him.

That confirms somewhat the remark made by an hon. member a short while ago. In fact, I do not know if that would improve matters, but it would enable him to see for himself that we are unfairly treated in eastern Canada, and that an assistant minister of agriculture in eastern Canada should have been appointed a long time ago.

There is another thing that I noticed with regard to the measure under study. It is about insurance and they would make loans to farmers between 21 and 45 years of age. If we look at the increase in the number of loans granted until now, we find that farmers from 21 to 45 years old who have always made a success of their farm operations but today find it necessary to get a loan, must be protected. What shall we do to protect them by way of farm loan insurance? Farmers over 45 also have rights. A special premium should be set for them. If they do not wish to take advantage of this insurance, let them at least have the satisfaction of saying it was offered to them.

Under the circumstances, I give the proposed amendment my wholehearted support, but I remain convinced that this measure will not solve the farmers' problem. The government must then make every effort to find outlets for their products. When we have succeeded in finding markets, it should be easier to deal with the problem and more farmers should be happy.

(Text):

Mr. Argue: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a few remarks at this time in answer to the speech made last evening by the Minister of Agriculture. I wish to say first of all that I am extremely pleased to see so much