

Government Orders

make this small move in order to ensure that the primary beneficiaries of this legislation are represented in a majority position or on an appeal committee.

I do not want to go on at length. I think it is regrettable that the government has not seen fit to approve a motion which would permit a majority of farmers to be the decision makers when it comes to the very important decisions this board will make, decisions that in large part will determine the land holding and therefore the future pattern of agricultural development in this country.

Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Prince Edward—Hastings): Mr. Speaker, I too want to make some very brief comments. I made mention earlier today in remarks to this House about the changes that the bill puts forward regarding the number of people on the board of directors of the Farm Credit Corporation. It increases that number. It does not enable the appointment of a review committee or an appeal committee or whatever you might want to call it.

As that is the case, it is imperative that there be some stipulation as to the make-up of the 10 board members—there will be 12 in total with the chairman and the president—of the Farm Credit Corporation.

In order to give all the comfort that we possibly can to those people in the farm community and in the independent and small and medium sized agrifood business community, it is imperative that there be an absolute assurance that the right type of people will be on the board of directors.

I do not think it is too much to ask that the membership of the board shall at all times include a majority of farmers. That is what the Farm Credit Corporation is there for. The government recognized by accepting an amendment to the bill earlier this morning emphasizing that the bill is to deal with and assist family farms and small and medium sized rural businesses. It has recognized that. This is only a follow-up to that in order to finish the bill off properly so that it gives a proper direction.

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, I support this motion before us, Motion No. 5, at report stage of Bill C-95 because I think it is critical that there be a new level of understanding by the board

of directors of the Farm Credit Corporation and a new look and better understanding of the needs of the borrowers as well as a need for accountability of the corporation itself.

I wish to put on record here in this House that the corporate plan of FCC of July 1988 was not tabled in this House as required by law or regulation within 15 days of the next sitting of the House as it was supposed to be. We tried on several occasions to get hold of that corporate plan and we were unable to do so until finally it was sent to us a couple of years later.

This amendment to have a majority of farmers on that board of directors would hold them accountable, not only to this House but to the borrowers of Canada.

• (1230)

I can well understand how they really did not want to table this because of what was in that corporate plan, and how they really wanted to convert the debt to equity. That can only be done one way, and that is by foreclosing on the farms so that rather than having a debt owing to the Farm Credit Corporation it shows up as an asset.

This is a very positive motion. We should look at it because so far we have seen a lot of programs that are supposed to help the farm sector out of its terrible, distressed economy over the last several years but they have only been band-aids.

While the industry is really dying a death of a thousand cuts, cuts inflicted by this government in the name of so-called globalization of trade and global competitiveness, the self-styled professionals, whether they are economists or agronomists, continue to dream in Technicolor. Today we are seeing some band-aids that will still keep the farmers off to one side of the decision-making process, not having a say in how their own lending institution, being financed by moneys from Treasury Board, will continue to operate.

Will these people continue to support globalization rather than support our own highly successful marketing boards, agencies and commissions? Those are the only sectors that are really showing a return in investment, management, labour and risk. They are ignoring the cost of the need for environmentally sustainable agriculture that must be implemented, with the costs shared by farmers and society as a whole.