

Farm Credit Act

During the discussion on agriculture estimates, I observed, on several occasions, that it was practically only with subsidized products that the farmers could make good, while as regards non-subsidized products, farmers lose too much money and give up production.

In concluding, I should like to raise another point which to my mind is extremely important. Looking into the balance sheet of the Farm Credit Corporation, I noted that among the ten members of the board, there was only one French Canadian. I feel that here again racial discrimination prevails; it is an odious and revolting treatment, and I hope that this inequality will be corrected.

It is amazing to see how, in all businesses, crown corporations, all kinds of corporations concerned with farm credit or anything else, that systematic ostracism has been applied for a number of years. And yet there are parliamentarians and Canadians who are amazed to hear about separatism or to receive representations from the province of Quebec, against that sort of treatment applied to French Canadians who are full-fledged Canadians.

I hope that such an absolutely inconceivable situation will be corrected.

[Text]

Mr. J. E. Pascoe (Moose Jaw-Lake Centre): The hon. members for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) and Rosthern (Mr. Nasserden) gave a clear outline of possible defects or weaknesses in the farm credit program envisaged in Bill No. C-100. I agree with their contention that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Hays) has apparently made very little attempt to tackle the main problem confronting agriculture which is, of course, the increasing cost of farm operations. What the minister has done is to double the amount which can be lent to farmers by the Farm Credit Corporation.

Bill No. C-100 might be described as a grandstand play by the government. I am expressing my own opinion when I say that loans of \$40,000 or \$50,000 may assist some farmers. Indeed, I would go as far as to say that loans of this size will greatly help a certain proportion of our farmers. But they are not the answer to rising farm costs. Although the minister has almost raised a club over our heads by indicating that there is very little money left from which to make farm credit loans, I think he is moving too quickly with regard to this bill. On occasions he has indicated a move to lighten the load of farm machinery costs. I think he should have re-

[Mr. Côté (Chicoutimi).]

vealed these plans first, because they could cut operating costs and thus reduce the need for large amounts of farm credit.

If farmers could be assured in the years ahead of \$2 wheat, as promised by the government, the need for farm credit would be reduced. If they could be assured of wheat markets in the years ahead, the need for large farm credits would similarly be reduced. My main objection to this bill is that, though credit facilities are so greatly expanded, little action has been taken by the government to guarantee that farmers will be able to repay their loans. Credit, in the absence of a definite, long range economic program for agriculture, will not provide for family farm security.

In this connection I found the following report as to the plans of the agricultural economics research council of Canada most interesting. I may say that this council is supported by the federal government, provincial government, farm organizations, co-operatives, and business and industry associated with agriculture. If I may I should like to read a few excerpts from this report. It states:

The first project will be a study of the relationship between Canadian agricultural policy and what is generally referred to as the farm problem. The purpose of the study is to analyse the objectives of past and present farm policies and relate them to the programs which have been implemented to achieve these objectives. The emphasis will be upon determining the economic effects of current policies. Furthermore, the study will try to add to knowledge of why a fundamental problem of major significance to the economic well-being of farmers continues to persist.

The third project—

And I think this is a very interesting one in connection with Bill No. C-100:

—is a study of the capital supply for Canadian agriculture...The study will assess the earning power of capital and relate it to the problem of creating new forms of credit which will be adequate for modern farm businesses.

The fourth study is designed to study the place of agriculture in the national economy...The purpose of this study is to analyse the position of agriculture in present-day Canadian society with a view to providing information which would assist agriculture, the general community and government to cope with the strains imposed by the changes which are taking place.

Mr. Speaker, the minister does not appear to be very interested in these remarks. I would draw to Your Honour's attention that we are speaking of Bill No. C-100, and if I could have the minister's attention for a few moments I would appreciate it. In the light of these research projects I say again that the Minister of Agriculture is attempting