

experimental legislation. But it is going to be a self-sufficient operation. If it goes slowly, all right. Perhaps it will pick up as time goes along, if it does not start out with a great rush. Perhaps it is a matter of farmers who have the facilities made available to them learning just what the value of these facilities will be and working out among themselves ways in which they can best use it.

**Hon. Mr. Lambert:** May I ask the honourable leader if the officials of the Department of Agriculture will be the principal witnesses in committee?

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** Yes. I would think the principal witnesses would come from the Farm Credit Corporation. Mr. G. Owen, who is chairman, would probably give evidence that will be most satisfactory to all honourable senators.

**Hon. Mr. Aseltine:** Will any farm organization be represented?

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** I know of none.

**Hon. Mr. Lambert:** May I suggest that possibly the agricultural division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics might put on record the data as to the number of modern combines and implements, and the extent to which they are distributed in the different provinces. This would show, for instance, whether the major part of this expenditure might be applied to western Canada. Such information, I think, would be essential to a better understanding of this bill and possibly shed further light on the subject.

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** I will draw that to the attention of the authorities, and if there is such a division of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, or elsewhere, which can provide the information, I will see to it that it is represented in committee.

Motion agreed to and bill read second time.

#### REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

On motion of Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West), bill referred to the Standing Committee on Banking and Commerce.

#### CROP INSURANCE ACT

BILL TO AMEND—SECOND READING—DEBATE  
ADJOURNED

**Hon. Eric Cook** moved the second reading of Bill C-129, to amend the Crop Insurance Act.

He said: Honourable senators, no doubt from time to time we all have had occasion to note with wonder how, when once a piece of legislation which serves a useful purpose is placed

on the statute books, it seems to grow and expand in succeeding years.

The Crop Insurance Act which was passed in 1959 and which is indeed a useful piece of legislation, is now to undergo its first expansion to better meet the needs of the farmers of Canada, if the proposed amendment is enacted.

In explaining the development of the Crop Insurance Act, a few words must be said about the Prairie Farm Assistance Act. This act will, of course, remain in full force and effect, but as at first glance it might seem to serve some of the same purposes as the Crop Insurance Act, I would like to give a very short outline of the history of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act.

Following the drought years during the 1930s it was considered necessary to develop some substitute for direct relief which had been used to assist farmers in disaster years on the prairies. Honourable senators will, of course, appreciate that the constitutional responsibility for providing assistance for those who suffer disaster such as crop failure rests with the provinces. The Prairie Farm Assistance Act was designed to enable farmers, in times when they had something to sell, to contribute to a scheme which would enable them, as a right, to secure assistance in times of crop failure. So the Prairie Farm Assistance Act was passed to assist the provinces in meeting their responsibility to citizens in distress. This act, however, only applies to the spring wheat area in Canada, which includes the Provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and the Peace River district of British Columbia. During the period from 1939 to the present, farmers of the spring wheat area have received, by way of payment made under the act, \$340 million, and have paid, by way of a one per cent levy on grain sales, \$153 million. I would point out that the operation of the Prairie Farm Assistance Act is not affected in any way by the Crop Insurance Act or by the proposed amendment. Now, however, in an area where his province has introduced crop insurance, a farmer has the option of purchasing crop insurance or remaining under the Prairie Farm Assistance Act.

It only remains to say that, while the Prairie Farm Assistance Act did and still does afford some measure of relief, its application is limited to the areas mentioned, and the coverage made possible is limited to \$800 per farmer, depending on the extent of crop failure. Actual payments made to farmers have averaged \$245.

The Crop Insurance Act has general application to all of Canada, and the coverage which may be obtained extends to 60 per cent of the value of the long-term average yield in any