

Mr. Nowlan: I rise on a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Annapolis Valley (Mr. Nowlan) rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate that the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) was trying to bait me. He has succeeded. In the practice I carried on in Nova Scotia there was no such thing as Farm Credit Corporation loans going through the small office I ran. However, I moved to British Columbia and joined a large law firm in which at that time the former minister of labour, now Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, was one of the senior partners. Because of the British Columbia complexion of that minister of labour in the former Pearson government, Farm Credit Corporation loans went through that office; but I had nothing to do with them in my practice of trial law, working with people and not the easy—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Whicher: Mr. Speaker, now we get down to the bill—

Mr. Hees: You had better start all over again.

Mr. Whicher: I was only trying to give the hon. member an opportunity to express to the people of Canada what was obvious to me, that he would not take advantage of the farmers of Canada and put these loans through his office at the rates lawyers charge in Canada. He and the hon. member for Hamilton West happen to belong to that fraternity, and even though I know they do not make any money out of farmers I do know, on the other hand, that they are not poor. I know farmers rates go up substantially because of the legal rates charged, and I issue that challenge to either of them—

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Hamilton West rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the hon. member giving a speech, but surely he should have some knowledge of what this act is all about. If he has not, I will start now and set it down for the edification of all hon. members. We who are lawyers know that the fee schedule under the Farm Credit Corporation is away below tariff with respect to any county in which lawyers practise.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: That is for the edification of the hon. member for Bruce who does not know—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alexander: The hon. member is misleading—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I must say, with respect to the hon. member—

Farm Credit Act

Mr. Alexander:—those—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Hamilton West knows that when the Chair asks him to resume his seat, he should do so.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I think all hon. members should follow that rule.

Mr. Whicher: I appreciate the remarks made by the hon. member for Hamilton West. I know too, Mr. Speaker, that all of us have to take the word of hon. members of this House. However, while we have to take it, the farmers of Canada do not have to believe what he said a few minutes ago. They know that one of the reasons why costs are so high—

An hon. Member: They know.

Mr. Whicher:—is that legal costs in Canada are high. Mr. Speaker, in paying my compliments to the Farm Credit Corporation and the staff which supervises all farm loans across Canada, I want to emphasize that in my experience I have found them to be very knowledgeable in every way. I do not know what the agricultural industry in Canada would have done without the Farm Credit Corporation, when we consider the thousands of loans that are administered to help the dairy farmer, the cattle farmer and the vegetable farmer. I say that they have done an excellent job.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Every now and again we have to modernize, Mr. Speaker, and this is exactly what the government is doing now through the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson). In the past, loans have been for "X" number of dollars, but through inflation and higher costs it is obvious that loans have to be increased. In previous years loans were given to farmers at about 30 years of age, but the act has reduced this age to be in accordance with the provincial laws.

Mr. Speaker, I listened all afternoon and all yesterday afternoon to members of the opposition talking on this bill. I listened with interest to the previous speaker, the hon. member for Annapolis Valley. Hon. members opposite have been opposed to this bill. Where does the Federation of Agriculture stand on this bill? Where does the National Farmers Union stand on this bill? It is for it almost 100 per cent. The only people who are against the bill are those in the opposition.

• (2120)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Whicher: Few will deny that agriculture has not had a fair deal in the last 25 years. The lack of a fair deal can be blamed not only on the present government, not only on the preceding government but on all governments, Conservative and Liberal, which have been in office since the last war. I do not think any member of the House can hold his head high and say that we have done a good job for agriculture. Nonetheless I remind you, Mr. Speaker,