

Farm Machinery

Before I go on to what I consider a very serious objection to this legislation as it now stands, I want to pay some attention to the remarks of the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette), who in his usual inimitable style saw fit to criticize the previous government by indicating that several legislative proposals dealing with agriculture which we had introduced when we were in office had not been referred to a committee. May I point out to him and, through you, Mr. Speaker, to all hon. members that the value of that legislation has been well illustrated by the fact that the present government have taken these pieces of legislation which we dealt with, have accepted them and have made some minor improvements, indicating their wholesale approval of the agricultural legislation which the previous government enacted. I say that because I think this bill presently under discussion has some limited usefulness.

In the part of the country in which I live there are hundreds of thousands of acres of arable land waiting to be put under cultivation and this bill might well have some usefulness to new settlers for the purchase of the expensive machinery required to clear the brush and cultivate this vast area. Each hon. member is properly entitled to express his point of view, and perhaps does so through the eyes of his own constituents. Legislation which may be of value to one area of this country may not necessarily be of equal value to another. Merely because the hon. members for Acadia (Mr. Horner) and Athabasca (Mr. Bigg), as well as others, have quite legitimately and honestly seen fit to criticize the bill, or at least parts of it, as being not applicable to their areas, does not mean a wholesale rejection of the bill. I think that fact was made quite clear by the hon. member for Kent (Ont.) (Mr. Danforth), who led off this debate on behalf of the official opposition.

While this act may not be too favourable, and I am quite sure it cannot be regarded as producing a very bright jewel, an emblem of which will be fixed to the diadem of agricultural legislation which the minister wears rather uneasily around his head, it might have some useful application in certain areas of the country. After this legislation has been exposed, analysed and been made the subject of constructive criticism in a committee I hope it will pass in an amended form.

I should now like to direct the attention of this house to what I feel is the most objectionable aspect of this bill. I am not in a

position to move an amendment at this time, but I will give notice now to the minister that in due course, when this piece of legislation has reached the committee stage, having passed a parliamentary committee, I intend to move certain amendments in respect of clause 9, about which I have certain reservations.

Clause 9 of the bill purports to give regulatory powers to the governor in council and in that connection I should like to read certain remarks made in a speech delivered by the parliamentary secretary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but I am sure he realizes that on second reading one cannot discuss the individual clauses of the bill. Perhaps he will keep this in mind in the course of his remarks.

Mr. Baldwin: I have completed my discussion of the particular clause which I feel is objectionable, and am now proceeding to a discussion of it in a general sense, Mr. Speaker, in the same way the parliamentary secretary did when he spoke on September 21.

I should first like to make this observation. In the sense that this purports to create a new concept of agricultural legislation there are three basic facts. The first relates to a definition of what shall be farm machinery. The second relates to a definition of what shall be a co-operative association entitled to take advantage of the legislation. The third relates to the circumstances under which an association shall be entitled to take advantage of the legislation, and includes regulations restricting the association in its incorporation and dealings with the government through the Farm Credit Corporation. Those are the three salient features of the legislation. They are the pith and substance of the whole matter. This is the heart of the whole issue.

In respect of each of these three facts I have outlined the government has seen fit to permit the governor in council to deal with these matters rather than this house, which has that legislative capacity, and is thereby legislating by regulation. I find that situation repugnant and objectionable. All too often members have been inclined to sit idly by through progressive erosion of their functions, allowing them to be usurped by the executive. This is another example of that situation. Surely it is for us as members of this House of Commons, elected by the people of this country, to decide what shall be farm machinery, what shall be the circumstances and terms of these agreements, and how shall