

*Government Orders*

The way the legislation is written, we will end up with a bunch of retired Tory bankers, bagmen, bogey men and not a group composed of primary producers. I think it is not unreasonable to suggest, and this was strongly recommended in the Canadian Federation of Agriculture brief to the legislative committee, that there be a majority of primary producers.

The parliamentary secretary has suggested that a primary producer while serving on the board may sell his farm and no longer be a farmer and that would change the balance on the board. It seems to me there is enough latitude in this amendment to suggest that as long as the person is a primary producer, a farmer, at the time of appointment this will be acceptable.

• (1220 )

I am sure amendments could be made.

To have the Farm Credit Corporation filled by a group of former bankers when agriculture in Canada is perhaps in the most unstable and uncertain period in its history is just unbelievable. It is simply unbelievable that any government would propose that to the House. We want a majority of the board of directors to be primary producers who understand the industry and its concerns. They understand what is happening out there with the uncertainty of the GATT negotiations and the free trade agreement. There is uncertainty about the value of the Canadian dollar and whether our wheat exports are going to be at an adequate price to provide a reasonable living for Canadian producers.

It is a very simple request and is recommended by the largest farm organization in the country. It is unbelievable that the government is proposing to do away with the advisory committee that was 100 per cent producers and incorporate it into a much larger board of directors and would not want to see a majority of those producers be farmers instead of people who are more concerned about the banking industry or other issues.

Clearly there is a space on any board of directors for representatives from the other sectors. When we are putting forward legislation which would provide funding for the processing, that would be wise. But regardless how you cut it, the legislation is directed to the primary producer, so the majority of the directors on the new corporation should be farmers or primary producers.

**Mr. Ray Funk (Prince Albert—Churchill River):** Mr. Speaker, the motion presently before us is Motion No. 5, which would call for:

The membership of the board shall at all times include a majority of farmers.

It is very similar in intent although somewhat different in the wording to a motion I submitted under my name which said:

That the minister shall ensure that as far as possible, the membership of the board includes at all times a majority of farmers.

I do not want to go on at length about this but I think it is really regrettable that the government or the Farm Credit Corporation was not able to accept this particular motion.

In this legislation we are increasing the size of the board of the Farm Credit Corporation from seven to twelve. With only seven people on the board it might have been argued that there was a certain range of expertise required to facilitate the functions of the board that rank and file farmers did not have available to them.

For example, there might have been legal or banking experience required for the functioning of the board. With the seven member board, a majority of farmers would require that only three outside directors not be farmers.

However, with 12 members on the board, five or six people from outside the farming community could sit on the board. That certainly would represent enough bodies on the board to cover the range of expertise that might be needed by the board. It is also regrettable that this motion is not being accepted when one considers the fact that the government has also turned down the motion which called for an advisory committee to the board to review the board's decisions.

• (1225 )

The effect of turning down both these motions will continue the present situation where there is no institutionalized way by which farmers can be guaranteed that within the organization there will be a body at either the board level or a review committee level that explicitly represents the interest of the farm community.

Surely in an era where we are in some ways being swamped with legalese, expertise and a decision-making environment that is far removed from the realities of life, in this case farming, it is regrettable that we cannot