

Mr. Speaker, you know as well as I do that the cost of farms has risen, as has the cost of buildings, of extensions. The cost of farm machinery such as tractors and combine-harvesters has gone up and even doubled in the last 10 years. The cost of digging manure pits keeps going up. I think that increasing the limit was justified.

• (1350)

I will not deny the importance for farmers of having access to financing in order to improve or expand their facilities. All the more reason to make their lives easier and allow them to meet their needs in a single place. More and more, Quebec favours the single window concept at all levels. In Quebec, there are now three organizations in place to help Quebec farmers who need financing.

Last weekend, I met with several farmers including my friend Bertrand Lacroix of Second Street in Disraeli, who explained to me how complex our situation is. On the one hand, you have Quebec's Société du financement agricole, which a few years ago was called the Office du crédit agricole and which comes under Quebec jurisdiction. On the other hand, you have the Farm Credit Corporation, which comes under federal jurisdiction. Thirdly, since there are 12 words in the bill before us this afternoon, an act to amend the Farm Improvement and Marketing Cooperatives Loans Act, from now on I will use the acronym AAFIMCLA. You can see how complex this is. We are really asking for it.

I am far from proud this afternoon of supporting this bill on behalf of the Bloc Québécois. Our accumulated deficit exceeds \$550 billion. While the deficit for this fiscal year will be close to \$40 billion, the government is increasing duplication and overlap. This is a good example of overlap within the same government. At the federal level, farmers can borrow either from the Farm Credit Corporation or under the Farm Improvement Loans Act. Why not consolidate all that? I am sure tens of millions of dollars would be saved each year this way. Not only would this government save tens of millions dollars each year, but it would be much more efficient. It is even worse for Quebec farmers, who have a third choice in the farm finance corporation.

Saturday afternoon, the farm producer I was visiting told me that he had had to shop around in order to finance his new facility. He applied for all three and came to the conclusion that the program that best suited his expansion needs—I am not saying that it would be the same for everyone, but for him—was the one offered by the Société de financement du Québec. Another time, the Farm Credit Corporation could prove to be a better choice. In this instance, he told me that he had weighed the three programs against one another and that the best deal was that of the Société de financement agricole, formerly known as Quebec Farm Credit Bureau.

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The bottom line is that a great deal of money is totally wasted on programs administered by three separate agencies. In their next budget, the various provincial governments, particularly Quebec and Ontario, which are two large provinces, will probably have to follow our finance minister's lead and hit their taxpayers hard. They will have to account for moneys spent, in my view, wastefully on duplication. In Quebec, we know what duplication is. We have been aware of this for quite a while, and that is why we would rather have our own tool box, with all the tools required to develop fully, freely and completely.

• (1355)

If the three programs I just mentioned are different, is it not because appropriate resources are scattered in three different places? What if the resources allocated to the other two agencies were made available to the Société du financement agricole? I would bet that it could provide new programs. It would be what we call a single window.

The province may have set criteria and standards of its own, which are not in line with what the federal government had in mind. Let us assume, for example, that the Quebec farm finance corporation's standards are higher than those set in bill C-75 for whatever reason. By setting separate standards, the federal government is once again interfering in provincial areas of responsibility.

Rather than moving to my next point, Mr. Speaker, I could stop here, and let you have the floor to call statements by members, and I could continue after oral question period.

The Speaker: Certainly, dear colleague. I thank you for letting me take the floor, as the saying goes.

It being 2 p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(5), we will now proceed to Statements by Members.

STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[English]

OKLAHOMA CITY BOMBING

Ms. Maria Minna (Beaches—Woodbine, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, April 19, a terrible and tragic event took place in the heartland of America. The bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City has shocked the entire world. The bombing has proven that no one is safe from the threat of terrorist activities and that terrorism can strike anywhere, even in the places that were once considered safe, as Canada witnessed at the provincial legislature in Prince Edward Island last week.

The most devastating aspect of the bombing is the number of young children who were killed in the blast. I cannot comprehend how anyone could possibly justify the taking of lives, especially those of innocent children.