

Farm Machinery Syndicates Credit Act

• (4:00 p.m.)

There is the further fact that it is costing more than ever before to farm in Canada today. For example, in 1966 the farmers of Canada spent \$479 million on farm machinery in just one year. It would be interesting to know where this \$479 million went. The fact is that \$149 million was spent on farm tractors, \$20 million was spent on planting and fertilizing machinery and \$10 million was spent on barn equipment. Our farmers are naturally trying to make their labour as light as possible and are buying modern equipment in order to lighten their burden, and also because of the fact that farm labour is getting increasingly more scarce. To continue, \$3 million was spent on spraying and dusting equipment, and \$73 million was spent on combines. This is the amount of money which was spent on farm equipment in one year. It represents an increase of 12.2 per cent over what was spent six years ago in 1960. So it must be obvious to anyone who gives the matter any thought that credit must be expanded and more money must be made available to the farmers in order to enable them to buy equipment which is urgently needed by them.

In 1966 \$13 million was spent on farm implements in the Atlantic provinces. In the province of Quebec \$46 million was spent, 21.4 per cent more than was spent six years ago. In Ontario \$102 million was spent on farm machinery. In Manitoba \$62 million was spent. In Saskatchewan, where the most money was spent, \$141 million was spent on farm machinery. In Alberta \$102 million was spent, and in British Columbia, \$10 million. I think that these figures must be convincing and must satisfy everyone on both sides of the house that additional credit must be made available to our farmers.

My chief complaint against the Farm Credit Act now in force is that apparently it only helps the big operators. The small farmers are not receiving the help from the Farm Credit Corporation which they should get. I remind the house that there is still a place in Canada for the small farmer. The annual report of the Farm Credit Corporation, while it does not say so in so many words, very definitely implies that there is no place in their program for the small family farm. This is not as it should be.

Let us look at the figures. In last year's report it is stated that the Farm Credit Corporation made 11,559 loans for a total of \$251 million. If we divide the number of loans into

[Mr. McQuaid.]

the amount of money lent we will find that the average loan by the Farm Credit Corporation last year was \$21,734. Apparently the corporation does not want to have anything to do with the small operator. How is the small operator going to survive if the policy of this government agency is continued in this way? As I said, there is a very important place for the small farmer, and I think that the necessary arrangements should be made with the Farm Credit Corporation so that the money required by the small farmer is made available to him.

The policy pursued at present by the Farm Credit Corporation is not the policy that was followed by the body which it replaced. When the old Canadian farm loan board was in existence it helped the small farmer. If we look at the average amount of the loans granted by the Canadian farm loan board we will find that it was around \$3,000 to \$5,000. That money was of some help to the small operator. Today, however, the small operator may just as well stay away from the Farm Credit Corporation because he receives no help and no encouragement from them.

As I said, there is still a place for the small farmer. To prove that there is a place for the small farmer and that he still plays an important part in our agricultural industry today, let me point out that in 1966 there were 430,000 census numbered farms in Canada, 104,000 of which, or 24 per cent, were in the 100 to 200-acre class. I suggest that this is a small farm. The small farmer might just as well stay home as go to the Farm Credit Corporation looking for help because they are just not interested in him unless he wants a loan of \$10,000, \$15,000 or \$20,000. Where is the small farmer to get the money?

The minister said in his statement on Monday night that the resolution dealing with the Farm Credit Corporation was designed to help the young man engaged in farming. In many cases the young farmer who is trying to establish himself does not need or want a \$25,000 or \$30,000 loan. There are many young men who can get along on less and who could probably set up a decent farming establishment if they could obtain credit for \$5,000, \$6,000 or \$8,000. These men can get no help at all from the Farm Credit Corporation, and this is one of the weaknesses of the corporation as it is now constituted.

Only one province in Canada, Alberta, has farms in excess of 100 to 200 acres. In that province the average farm is larger than that. However, in Canada today 24 per cent of our