

not happy with the decision of the Farm Credit Corporation. My motion says that:

“(3) The board shall establish an advisory committee to review, at the request of any interested person, any decision made by the corporation under paragraph 4(2)(a).

—which is the list of purposes to which loans and loan guarantees can be applied. It also says that:

(4) For greater certainty, a decision made by the advisory committee established under subsection (3) shall not be binding on the board or have the effect of altering or annulling any decision of the board.”

In other words, this would provide for an appeal process, a review committee to which a person or an organization could appeal a decision of the Farm Credit Corporation. It also makes it very explicit that the decision of that body would not be binding on the corporation but merely would be advisory to it.

It is important to note that the government's seeming rejection of this provision means that it is rejecting something that in fact has been the practice in the past. To my knowledge there is a review procedure, an appeal procedure, within the Farm Credit Corporation at the present time which serves the very function that would be enshrined in Motions Nos. 10 and 12.

Surely it is only right to have such a body available to people doing business with the corporation. It is an agency of the Crown and thus it acts on behalf of the people of Canada. It is also a very human institution in which individuals make the best judgments according to guidelines that are provided to them. Very often these guidelines are imprecise, have grey areas, and allow a fair bit of individual latitude concerning decision making. There are probably legitimate reasons that a person could argue that the decision of the corporation goes against its own guidelines and policies, or situations in which an individual might dispute the facts that have been made available to the Farm Credit Corporation and its officers.

As members of Parliament, all of us who represent rural constituencies are very much aware of the disputes that occur between farmers and the corporation. It is often very difficult for us to determine who is right and who is wrong. But in very many of these cases we all know that there is a legitimate grievance to be had, a legitimate case to be presented by the person unhappy with a decision.

Government Orders

Precluding an appeal procedure for those kinds of people means that rather than going to an appeal board the only recourse these people will have is an appeal to the political process or the courts.

• (1130)

As we all know from our attempts to intervene in these cases, members of Parliament, although we would gladly accept the responsibility of following up these cases, often feel we are not the appropriate people to conduct the kind of inquiries and hear all sides of the evidence required to make a fair judgment. As members of Parliament we know those kinds of cases occur. Therefore one avenue of appeal is often not appropriate.

The second avenue of appeal is an appeal to the courts. That is an expensive and time-consuming process, as anybody who has ever been involved with it knows very well. Often people who are in a situation in which they are appealing a decision of the Farm Credit Corporation have stretched their resources to the limit, are going broke and are in a state of personal crisis with respect to themselves and their families. Having to go to court, with all that implies, is another burden they really do not need and it does nothing to enhance either their own well-being or the decision-making process.

Therefore it seems to me that the government should recognize that there is a right in a democracy to appeal decisions that are made on behalf of the Crown and to enshrine in this legislation what has been the practice, which is that people who disagree with the decisions made by the Farm Credit Corporation have a right of appeal internally within the corporation. As I previously noted, this would not be binding but would have an advisory effect and would present an opportunity for both sides of a dispute to be heard.

I appeal to the government to take the common sense and just approach and continue the practice that has been in place in the past by providing an appeal procedure with respect to decisions of the Farm Credit Corporation.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I want to speak briefly on this amendment and at the same time take the opportunity to speak on the bill.