

*Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act*

benefit. Another thing which makes this amendment necessary today is the fact that some provincial governments have passed provincial debt adjustment legislation in an effort to protect the producer on the land and keep him from being victimized by foreclosure operations on the part of people who wish to foreclose against him. That provincial debt legislation saved many farms. However, the moratorium feature of the provincial debt legislation was questioned before the courts and later was taken, through appeal, to the Supreme Court of Canada. A final decision was brought down, I believe in 1955, which declared the provincial debt adjustment act to be *ultra vires*. The result is that the protection offered by the provincial legislation is no longer available. Hence the purpose of Bill No. 350 with its various amendments is to amend the original Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act so as to make it operative, to make it so that it will be applicable to farmers who find themselves in serious indebtedness at the present time and who are threatened with foreclosure and the possible loss of their life-long earnings through no fault of their own.

It may seem odd that producers should require this kind of protection. However, they are operating in one of the most difficult industries in the country. Along with fishermen, they find that in some years they have crops and in other years they do not. As far as the national interest is concerned and as far as the production of food is concerned, I believe that here is a portion of the population that requires protection, having regard to the many dangers to which farm production is liable such as frost; drought; insects; the vagaries of the economic condition of the country; wars; the fact that other people enter into competition; the fact that perhaps through federal policies they fail to sell the farmers' product. On the western prairies we find hundreds of thousands of farmers deeply in debt and unable to meet their obligations from day to day while at the same time their bins are full of excellent wheat. They have produced the food which a hungry world requires but, through no fault of their own, they are unable to sell it. Along with that situation, they are faced with constantly increasing costs which must be met from day to day and they are placed in an extremely difficult position with regard to debt. In order to keep efficient producers on the land, I think it only right and proper that this type of protection should be available to them. The purpose of this bill is to amend the act and to make it available.

The royal commission on agricultural and rural life passed a recommendation to the effect that the provisions of all existing farm

[Mr. Castleden.]

security and debt adjustment legislation should be consolidated and placed in a form where it should be available to farmers who are in need. It also recognized that such debt adjustment legislation should be associated with sound credit and supervision programs for the re-establishment of agriculture where conditions have made it almost impossible for the farmers to carry on.

That outlines briefly, Mr. Speaker, the reasons for the act, some of the history of the act and the reasons why I believe that this house should pass this bill in order that the original intentions of the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act might be operative for people today.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the house to adopt the motion?

**Mr. Benidickson:** In view of the illness of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson), I move the adjournment of the debate.

On motion of Mr. Benidickson the debate was adjourned.

## INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

## AMENDMENT OF CHAPTER 152, REVISED STATUTES OF 1952—VOLUNTARY REVOCABLE CHECK-OFF OF UNION DUES

The house resumed, from Friday, February 24, consideration of the motion of Mr. Knowles for the second reading of Bill No. 5, to amend the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (voluntary revocable check-off).

**Mr. J. A. Blanchette (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I shall not pretend to have new arguments to place before the house on this bill, as practically all the arguments possible have been advanced, from year to year, each time that a similar bill has been discussed.

The devotion and interest of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who has presented this bill is to be highly commended; but I am wondering whether the progress which is being made, from year to year, in industrial relations has not somewhat reduced the significance of this cause which he has espoused so ardently by the presentation of this bill.

The developments in the field of labour-management relations have strengthened the convictions of many that legislative provisions for this check-off would not serve any useful purpose in our federal legislation. The role of governments in industrial relations has always been—and will continue to be—a very live topic for discussion. Moreover, is it not generally accepted that the primary role of government should be one that is