

*Farmers' Creditors Act*

for that reason that I felt it desirable to deal with the matter in the house if possible rather than get into a committee proceeding where it is difficult to visualize an unwillingness to hear representations pro and con from all over the country.

However, I am in the hands of the house, and if there is a disposition on the part of hon. members to desire a committee reference, I shall accede to that request. Offhand, if such reference is desired, I think I would suggest the banking and commerce committee as perhaps the most suitable for the purpose. I suppose the committee itself would have to determine whether or not it would hear representations pro and con from all over the country. I can assure the house that if such a committee is decided upon, the sessions will be lengthy; there will be many representations and many concerns desirous of appearing by counsel before the committee. If, however, there is an expression of opinion now on second reading in favour of reference to a committee, I shall ask the house to give the bill second reading and then I shall come along with the proper motion after we have had time to consider the matter further.

Mr. BENNETT: If I might say a further word, I had no intention that the reference to a committee should involve the calling of witnesses, and I did not propose that when the minister moved that the bill go to a committee, he should embody provisions for calling witnesses. My proposal was only for the purpose of enabling members of the house who have suggestions as to reasonable methods to put them before the committee without having to take up the time of the house in submitting amendments which could not be as thoroughly discussed in committee of the whole as they could before a standing committee. I agree entirely with what the minister said as to the inadvisability of proceeding along the lines to which he has referred, and it was not intended that his motion should embody any provision for hearing counsel or witnesses; the idea was merely that members of the house might have an opportunity to appear and suggest amendments which I dare say most of them have had suggested to them by their constituents.

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggart): If this bill is to be referred to a committee, might I suggest that it be a special committee? I believe with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) that there would be large numbers of representations, probably written as well as by people who want to be heard; and as a member of the banking and

[Mr. Dunning.]

commerce committee I believe that the time of that committee is going to be very well occupied. I noticed to-day, there was a motion to allow the committee to sit coincidentally with the house. It seems to me that if this matter is to be discussed by a committee, it should not be the banking and commerce committee, or no conclusion might be reached this session, and I am of the opinion that we should come to some conclusion this session.

Mr. DUNNING: Oh, positively.

Mr. COLDWELL: I believe the Minister of Finance is taking the proper course in endeavouring to meet the needs of the various provinces in this regard, and I can assure him that as far as Saskatchewan is concerned it is a matter of very pressing need. The people there look to this session of parliament to do something in two directions; to relieve the present necessity, and if possible to give some relief to those who had their cases dealt with by a former board, conditions having become aggravated in the last two or three years. So I support the idea of having this question considered by a committee, but I think it should be a committee other than the banking and commerce committee, possibly a special committee.

Mr. E. E. PERLEY (Qu'Appelle): I desire to support the suggestion made by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) and the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell). I think it is absolutely necessary that some further amendments than those provided in this bill be made to the act to meet the situation in Saskatchewan. I know the people there are looking for further amendment, and I support the proposal that the bill go to a committee. I think the suggestion of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart is a good one. Some of these committees are getting pretty well loaded up with work, and as action should be taken promptly in this matter perhaps a special committee is desirable.

Mr. W. A. TUCKER (Rosthern): I rise with some hesitation to express an opinion on this matter. The suggestion of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bennett) is that this committee should be restricted pretty well to hearing the opinions of hon. members. Now, as I understand, hon. members can express themselves quite freely and make suggestions and propose amendments in committee of the whole house—they cannot move amendments which may involve expenditure of money, but they can suggest them, and I assume