

Farm Machinery

reading stage, practically all of which was occupied by the speech of the parliamentary secretary. Then on September 22 the debate was renewed and there was a particularly lengthy question period preceding it, occasioned as usual by the lengthy answers of ministers of the crown. The debate was also interrupted part way through by a statement on motions made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon) and replied to by members from each of the parties. Consequently, I submit that less than one full day has been devoted to the second reading stage of this bill, a bill which the minister has indicated is a very important piece of legislation and something in the nature of an experiment. I suggest that any intimation that time should be limited to less than one day on the second reading of a bill of this kind is completely improper and wrong. I think we would not be fulfilling our duty if we did not give to this bill the attention and the analysis it requires.

For example, Mr. Speaker, on the resolution stage I asked some questions. At that time we knew not what was in the bill. I asked what I thought were proper questions, but as yet the minister has not answered them. I referred, as did one other hon. member today, to the fact that legislation of this kind is probably the only way in which many of our native peoples—the Indians under the Indian Act and the metis under the metis colonies act of the province of Alberta—could have an opportunity to secure the type of financial assistance required for programs of this nature, which is denied them under other legislation owing to the fact that they do not hold title to their land, having only certificates of occupation. I hope the minister will take this matter up with his colleague the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Tremblay), and I also propose to deal with it on the estimates of that minister and to ask him the same question. I think it is tremendously important to see that these people do have an opportunity, as do other people in Canada, of obtaining for themselves the benefits available under farm legislation.

During the resolution stage I also pointed out that under the Farm Improvement Loans Act approximately \$100 million in one year alone had been made available for the purchase of farm machinery. I pointed out that under those conditions, using this as a yardstick, it was most unlikely that the \$25 million would be sufficient for the job if it were to do the job which the minister said it would. I also pointed out that under the

Farm Credit Act, which was passed by the previous government, there is provision for loans to co-operative associations for purposes covered by the act, including the purchasing of machinery.

I thought we were entitled to be told why farm co-operative associations had not made greater use of the facilities of that act before legislation of this kind was introduced. These were questions which I think were reasonable and moderate, which might well have been answered, and which I hope the minister may yet answer before the conclusion of this debate.

With regard to the amendment before the house, I do not think I could vote for it as it now reads; but that does not mean that the subject matter of this bill should not be referred to the agriculture committee. The minister said that this legislation is important and is breaking new ground. It is legislation which is a completely new concept. Surely, Mr. Speaker, under those conditions it would be but right and proper that this bill be referred to the agriculture committee, where it would receive not too lengthy a period of debate but representatives of farm organizations, who after all are the ones who have the greatest interest in the bill, not us, would have the opportunity of appearing and making representations and suggestions. It is for that reason I am convinced that the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Nugent) moved this amendment, because he thought that this bill would then have been likely finalized once it received second reading. I know the bill can be amended in committee, but once the house, and particularly the government, has given approval in principle on second reading of a bill there is a tendency for the matter to be crystallized and there is an unwillingness on the part of the government to accept any amendments. I think that is probably applicable to any government, and it is quite usual; but I hope to see in the future the subject matters of many more bills referred to committee for consideration before rather than after second reading.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, before I sit down I propose to move an amendment to the existing amendment which I submit would have the effect of permitting both these desirable results to be achieved. I am going to propose, first, that the subject matter of the bill go to committee, there to be considered and to receive representations from farm organizations, at the same time the bill not being given approval in principle in this house on second reading.

[Mr. Baldwin.]