

Senator Hollett: Is the word "farmer" defined anywhere in this?

Mr. Golden: No, it is not.

Senator Hollett: Of course I know what a farmer is, but I know a number of people who call themselves farmers and who have never turned a sod in their lives.

Mr. Golden: The Income Tax Act defines that quite clearly.

Senator Belisle: In this Federation, every provincial organization will be able to join?

The Law Clerk: There is an enabling provision to that effect which is section 2, subsection (3).

Senator Grosart: How will this organization relate to existing national farmers' organizations?

Mr. Atkinson: It will be separate and apart. At least, it will be an independent corporate entity, if you will.

Senator Grosart: How will it be distinguished from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture?

Mr. Atkinson: The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is a federation of organizations, whereas this organization will be an organization of farmers. In other words, it will be a single organization whereas the Federation represents many organizations.

Senator Grosart: That is why you call it a union?

Mr. Atkinson: Yes. The old national federation was a federation of unions and the experience we had in that field led us to the conclusion that it was important to give farmers a forum through which they could work which was national in nature.

Senator Grosart: How will the will of the members be expressed in relation to executive action?

Mr. Atkinson: The process is as follows: members will meet and make decisions through their locals which will be referred to regional conferences or national conventions in which the members' will will be resolved. The decisions which come out of those conventions will then be the guidelines through which the organization will operate. These will be the parameters of the policy of the board of directors.

Senator Grosart: Would this not be the same as the Federation of Agriculture?

Mr. Atkinson: It would be somewhat different. The Canadian Federation of Agriculture is divided into groups who make decisions at the organizational level.

Senator Grosart: But endorsed by their members in the same way as yours?

Mr. Atkinson: Endorsed by their members to the organizational plateau. Once they move past the organizational plateau it is a meeting of resolutions from the various organizations across the country. Then there is an organizational trade-off in terms of decisions made.

Senator Grosart: Is yours not the same? You say you have local regions.

Mr. Atkinson: It is different in this sense, that their process is through a delegation of delegates to various levels. Ours is direct from the farm community to the decision-making body, which is a national convention.

Mr. Golden: There is a basic structural difference. I am not very familiar with the actual underground workings of the two organizations, but the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is a body made up not only of actual farm organizations, but of other organizations in the farming field. It is a broader type of organization. When Mr. Atkinson referred to a trade-off he really meant different interests can appear at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, whereas in the Farmers Union there would be no room, for instance, for elevator companies.

Senator McDonald: Is the Canadian Federation of Agriculture not a federation of wholesale and retail concerns and not of producers?

Mr. Atkinson: I would call it a conglomerate in which the wholesale and retail handling concerns and farmers meet and trade off policy decisions.

Senator Argue: Would you not consider that the Canadian Federation of Agriculture is an organization of business groups, albeit farmers' business groups, but wheat pool, co-op creameries, co-op implements, and so on? I may be wrong, but my impression at any rate is that it is an organization of farmers' business groups.

Mr. Atkinson: We term them agri-business groups. It is farm and business.

Senator Argue: It is not individual farmers in individual organizations.