

Farm Credit Act

Mr. Chairman, at this moment I also take pleasure in mentioning that the riding of Richmond-Wolfe, which I have the privilege of representing in this house, contains several essentially rural parishes, and that a very considerable number of the farms there are considered by the Farm Credit Corporation as marginal, because the annual income of these farmers is inadequate. Mr. Chairman, they do have inadequate income because they are forced to sell their produce at a ridiculously low price.

I want now to bring to the attention of the house a few statistics with regard to the prices of dairy products in eastern Canada in the last few years. In 1952, a hundred-weight of milk was selling for \$3.25 to secondary industries; in 1962, the hundred-weight was sold \$2.70 to the same industries, which means a decrease of 55 cents per 100 pounds.

Now, let us look at the price of balanced feed for the milk cow: In 1952, the price was \$2.65 a hundredweight; in 1962, it is \$3.70 a hundredweight, or an increase of \$1.05 a hundredweight.

To remedy that tragic situation, several agricultural advisers recommended the enlargement of farms so as to produce more, thinking that the situation could be settled in this way.

The farmer had then to ask the corporation for an increase in the amount of the loans in view of those improvements. He had to spend terrific sums to buy farm implements, the prices of which have rapidly increased in the last few years. In order to pay for those purchases, the farmer often had to borrow from the banks or from finance companies at an interest rate which he could not afford.

Mr. Chairman, the farmers in my riding, like those across Canada, are not asking for charity. They are industrious and they strive seriously to succeed but, in order to do so, they look to their representatives in parliament for specific legislation in the field of agriculture and a marked improvement in the Farm Credit Act.

Mr. Chairman, our farmers have been too long the victims of an administration which has failed to perform its duty as far as agriculture is concerned. Perhaps our administrators were not aware of the facts, like the young lady in this story told by a farmer who used to rent cottages during the summer. The following conversation took place one morning, just a few minutes before the tourists left:

"What a pretty little cow you have over there," observed the young lady. "But how come it has no horns?" she asked the farm owner.

"Well," the farmer replied undisturbed, "there are many reasons why a young cow like that has no horns. First, certain breeds are slow to grow horns; their horns only show up at a rather advanced stage in life. For others, the horns become a danger and they are cut off at some time or other in their life. Finally, we now have breeds without any horns at all. But in this case, there is a slight difference. You see, that little cow has no horns simply because it is a young horse."

Mr. Chairman, if the members of the old-line parties had been aware of the situation, maybe the Farm Credit Act would have been amended, not only to increase the capital at the disposal of its administrators but also to decrease its rate of interest.

The increase of the capital of the Farm Credit Corporation is certainly a slight improvement that will help many Canadian farmers who have to be satisfied with half measures because the present economic system, through the consequences of its implementation, is stripping our farmers of their possessions.

Mr. Chairman, in my constituency there are farms on which three generations of farmers lived without going into debt, while giving to their families security and well-being. Today these small farms are classified as uneconomic. I have to remind you that there are thousands of such farms in the province of Quebec. There are exactly 64,442 farms from one to 69 acres, 53,637 farms from 70 to 179 acres and 4,538 farms of 180 acres and over.

Today, the owners of these farms must resort to loans from the Farm Credit Corporation, with the result that all those farmers have become tenants. If strong measures are not taken soon, they will become proletarians, something to which we, of the Social Credit, object strongly.

We are for the survival of the family farm. It has been the basis not only of our economy but also of our society, since the arrival in Canada of our courageous settlers. However, the family farm cannot survive under the present economic conditions.

Will you allow me, Mr. Chairman, to give you some statistics so that we might see if that prosperity about which the hon. members opposite have talked is a fact. Since I have been in this house, I have noticed that our friends in the old parties have a way all their own of making vague statements. They use percentages that cover only one or some aspects of the problem.