

Farm Credit Act

well, to provide for open-end loans which will allow additional borrowing without refinancing costs.

That would take out the means test which the Tory party has suggested.

• (1630)

[Translation]

Hon. Théogène Ricard (Saint-Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. Does the hon. member want to speak to the amendment or—

[English]

At this time the Chair is considering the amendment moved by the hon. member. After reading all the precedents that have existed in this House, and also in the United Kingdom, the Chair can find no precedent for the acceptance of an amendment to a reasoned amendment moved on second reading of a bill. On the other hand, looking at the wording of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight) and its impact on the amendment which has been proposed, at first glance the Chair would be ready to accept it. Unless hon. members would like to express their views as to the acceptability of the change made by this subamendment, I would be ready to put the motion.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): It is moved by the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Knight):

That the amendment be amended by deleting therefrom the words "where young farmers meet performance standards," and by substituting therefor the words "for young farmers,".

[Translation]

Mr. Ricard: Mr. Speaker, the measure now before us, Bill C-5, will apply to a great extent to a large number of people in my riding, therefore, I ought to state clearly my position in this regard.

First of all, I would like to mention that this measure, which affects a large number of Canadians, is worth being examined, reviewed and corrected, so that farmers get as much as possible out of it; and my hon. friend from Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) introduced an amendment designed to encourage young farmers to this end.

If we are to expect that one day farmers as well as agriculture will continue to develop in the country, it is fair to assume that unless enough people are available to take over in this sector, it will be impossible to expect any improvement in our farmers' condition.

The hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) would like us to agree with him completely, to believe him without question and to pass as soon as possible the measure now before us.

However, the past behaviour of the minister leads us to be extremely cautious, because his attitude toward farmers invites us to ask ourselves questions. One must not forget, Mr. Speaker, that it is the present Minister of Agriculture who reduced by \$10 million in 1970 the budget of the Canadian Wheat Board. One must not forget that it is this same minister who penalized milk producers for overproduction.

[Mr. Knight.]

Therefore, for all those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I deem it my duty to urge the House to proceed very carefully and to scrutinize in every detail the measure now before us. I am sure we all want farmers to get the best terms possible. As a matter of fact, when we were in power, we gave proof of what I am now saying.

One must recognize also that this government also took measures in order to improve the farmer's lot. There is much more to be done however, and it is up to both government levels to co-operate.

The main reason for my taking part in the debate this afternoon is perhaps more precisely related to that co-operation between the provincial and federal governments in the agricultural field.

One knows that according to section 95 of the Constitution, the jurisdiction in agricultural matters is divided between the provinces and the federal government. I was somewhat shocked yesterday by the diatribe which the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Lessard) aimed at the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, the hon. Mr. Toupin.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): He deserved an answer.

Mr. Ricard: I need not say here that I do not hold a brief for him. I am not known as a staunch supporter of the Quebec Minister of Agriculture, but I see in him and in his successors a contracting party to the jurisdiction in the agricultural field.

First of all, the attack the Parliamentary Secretary made against the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Quebec was groundless, for he accused him of statements he never made. In fact, he mistook this for a committee report on the state of agriculture in Quebec. In fact, Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The Parliamentary Secretary on a question of privilege.

Mr. Lessard (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe just stated that I attributed to the Minister of Agriculture for the province of Quebec statements which are groundless. I am afraid I was sitting in front of my TV set when I very distinctly heard the said minister, the hon. Normand Toupin, state that, because of the federal government policy, it was impossible for the Quebec Department of Agriculture to establish a global policy. That is why I rose yesterday to set the record straight.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. The Chair finds it very difficult however to recognize that the question of privilege raised by the parliamentary secretary is well taken. If an hon. member should use this device every time his views or his interpretation differ from those of another hon. member, the House would be constantly debating questions of privilege or points of order. I think this is more a debate or an argument which can better be clarified at a later stage in this debate.