

Supply—Agriculture

Mr. Stanfield: The minister is so entertaining, and he may give us some information later, so let him keep on.

Mr. Olson: I thank the committee for that. I have a lot of questions to answer and I shall do so as quickly as possible. I was about to tell the Leader of the Opposition that the credit extended by the Farm Credit Corporation in 1963 amounted to \$96 million, and by 1967 it had gone up to \$251 million. This is a rather significant increase. In so far as crop insurance is concerned, in 1963 the average for family farms was in the neighbourhood of \$16 million and by 1967 it had gone up to \$187 million. One can see, therefore, that these programs are designed specifically with the family farm in mind. There has been a great deal of response to these programs by those in these farm units.

The Leader of the Opposition also had something to say about the national congress on agriculture.

Mr. Stanfield: Why don't you deal with the point I made about family farms, if you are going to talk about them?

Mr. Olson: You mean about succession duties?

Mr. Stanfield: Yes.

Mr. Olson: Well, the hon. gentleman knows very well that there were no succession duty changes that were different for farmers than for any other citizens in Canada. It is the responsibility of the Minister of Finance to deal with matters relating strictly to finance, and which apply to all citizens of Canada. There is no discrimination with regard to those small farms or small businesses, so it seems to me that the Leader of the Opposition has the same access to the Minister of Finance as I have and could make these representations to him.

Mr. Nowlan: Did the Minister of Finance talk to you before he brought in these taxes; that was the question?

Mr. Olson: The Minister of Finance and I have a number of conversations on a number of things.

Mr. Stanfield: Will the minister permit a question?

Mr. Olson: Certainly.

Mr. Stanfield: Is he concerned about the effect of these taxation proposals on the family farm, or is he not?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Chairman, the answer to that question is yes. I might say that, as Minister of Agriculture, I am concerned about all things that affect the well-being of people who are involved in agriculture.

The Leader of the Opposition had some remarks to make about the national congress on agriculture. He felt there would be some disability suffered because of the failure of the two farm organizations to nominate someone to the steering committee. I should like to advise him that there were, we felt, a reasonable number of positions created on the steering committee; I think there were five. We asked the ten provincial departments of agriculture to nominate one representative on the committee. They got together and did nominate one person to that committee. We asked the processing and marketing groups in the country to nominate a representative to the committee, which they did. We asked the farmers union and the Canadian Federation of Agriculture to nominate someone to represent them on the steering committee. I have the letters, if the hon. member would like to see them. Both organizations wrote back and said they could not agree on who it should be, so they nominated more than one person. Well, there was only one position vacant. It seems to me the Leader of the Opposition should recognize that if ten provincial governments of different political stripes could get together to nominate one person to represent them on the steering committee, surely it was not expecting too much for two farm organizations to do this.

I believe it was the hon. member for Crowfoot who said—and these are not my words—that it is well known there is some disagreement between these two organizations. I do not endorse that. If there is, I do not think it should be transferred into the steering committee, when we are trying to set up a national congress on agriculture.

The Leader of the Opposition said we should have some projections made for 1975, and even beyond that. I want to tell him that I have with me an agricultural projection prepared on an international scale by the OECD. The ink is hardly dry on it because we got it in Paris last week. This projection was prepared in co-operation with all countries within the OECD area—Japan, North America, most of western and southern Europe. What the hon. member is suggesting we should be investigating, in fact, has already been done.