to be few humane considerations in the criteria governing loans. I would welcome any move which would make the Farm Credit Corporation legislation a more humane piece of legislation than it is at present. Perhaps this will happen when we discuss the bill in committee and learn something about its background and what is intended. In the meantime, I do not see very much wrong with raising the limit of loans on family-held corporations and co-operatives to $250,000.

I did not realize that, since I am over 45, I am not eligible for a Farm Credit Corporation loan, as proposed here. Why should this provision be included in the bill? After all, I can borrow from the International Development Bank without difficulty. Little restriction is placed in one's way. That is not so with the Farm Credit Corporation. I think we are being a little sticky with this age limit, because there is a suggestion here that we are not placing too much faith in our agricultural industry. We should place more confidence in our agricultural industry. Surely, it is realized that farmers today are healthier than they were years ago, and that they probably will live longer than Farm Credit Corporation officials think they will. In time they might even pay off their mortgages. Even if they do not pay them off, the farm units will still be there. I know many farmers in my area are still active and expanding their holdings. They are still trying to get ahead of costs by becoming more productive. The hon. member for Prince Edward Island who spoke just now about agriculture was quite correct. I do not know how our city cousins view agriculture, but I do know that in no other part of our society are the returns smaller on any given investment. Few industries are more productive than the agricultural industry.

You know, Mr. Speaker, we talk about serving our country, and about the great deal of money we are putting into agriculture. Really, when you consider it, the amount of money to be put into the Farm Credit Corporation is infinitesimal. As I say, the amounts we are to make available to our farmers are infinitesimal when we compare them with the amounts we are giving to industry. Do not forget that in Canada over 50 per cent of our people earn their livelihood from the food producing and associated industries. Yes, 50 per cent of Canadians earn their livelihood from these industries.

When I look out of my window at home, I can see a $30 million plant that was put there by some of the most highly educated people in Canada, if you measure education in terms of the PhD. This plant never really got into production before going bankrupt because the owners had not done their homework properly. The system did not work. If the Farm Credit Corporation showed a loss of $31 million, there would be newspaper articles written all across this land stating that the farmers do not pay their debts. The government had invested $11 million in this plant, and the remainder was provided by Canadians who invested in stock. They probably will not get five cents on the dollar for their investment.

• (1630)

Why do I make this comparison? I do so because many people do not understand that this type of thing is happening. However, when a little bit of money is given to the farmers, everyone hollers bloody murder because the

[Mr. Whelan.]

agricultural producers are again being given a subsidy. The province from which I come produces one third of this nation's wealth, but my part of the province receives the least subsidy of any agricultural part of Canada. These are efficient producers. All they want is a chance.

I wish to make a comparison of the loans made to farmers in the area I represent and the area right next door to me. These loans are made by the Farm Credit Corporation for every kind of farm corporation that exists in Canada. I give them marks for doing this. In our area we have vegetable farming, fruit farming, greenhouse farming, that is farming under glass, grain farming of every description, mushroom farming and whatever else you can name. The Farm Credit Corporation had the foresight to lend these people the limit allowed under the present act. Many farmers in that area who applied for loans were turned down. A tremendous number of the people to whom the Farm Credit Corporation makes loans are new Canadians. The Farm Credit Corporation recognizes them as capable technicians. However, people in another part of the government of Canada do not think these people can make a way of life for themselves which will qualify them to become landed immigrants. Some of the most successful farmers in that area came here after the last war.

We do not know how many of these people are discouraged from applying for loans, even to the extent of being told not to send in $10 for an application. There are no statistics to show how many of these people have become successful by borrowing from Shylocks and paying a very high rate of interest. I am concerned about people who borrow from the Farm Credit Corporation and must pay inflated prices for farm land. Many successful people, especially in some of the technical types of farm operations, did not borrow from the Farm Credit Corporation. They paid a higher interest rate than people are paying today on loans they obtained from the Farm Credit Corporation. I think the Farm Credit Corporation has a long way to go. The wishes and desires of the Canadian Federation of Agriculture must be authentic or they would not be making these representations which, I am sure, represent a certain point of view of many Canadians. They ask the government to go even farther than this bill does at this time.

I think Bill C-5 is a step in the right direction or the Canadian Federation of Agriculture would not be asking for it. If I had any further criticism of the Farm Credit Corporation and the bill presently before the House, it would be that the bill does not go far enough. However, I commend the minister for bringing forward this bill in its present form. At least it is a step in the right direction.

Mr. A. C. Cadieu (Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this debate. I have been interested in the Farm Credit Corporation for a long time. I have become aware of many of the problems which the Farm Credit Corporation has had to face, not because of a lack of efficiency on the part of its staff, but because many farmers who made loans were forced to accept such low prices for their produce. Many farmers have had their backs forced against the wall, and been unable to meet their obligations. I think the increase in the amount of the farm credit loan may work out very well. However, with-