

Farm Machinery

ferring to the amendment he wanted to second, which proves he is an able lawyer.

Mr. Speaker, Conservative members are asking that this bill be referred to a committee. Yet the Conservatives accused us of being slow in providing assistance to farmers, especially eastern farmers. They accuse us of delaying our legislative program and of being slow to act. Now that we want to act, they practise obstruction. They want to put the bill off indefinitely, to refer it to a committee which will delay its passage when we are ready to act.

Where are those men of action? Where are those laggards who, for six years, put off giving eastern farmers an appropriate and adequate farm policy as claimed by them.

Mr. Speaker, it is asked to have this matter referred to the committee. I have very interesting statistics in hand. In January 1958, consideration was given to a piece of legislation called the Agricultural Stabilization Act. The opposition of that time, led by the present Prime Minister, asked that this measure be referred to a committee, and those who were then governing the country, those who are the Conservative opposition today, were opposed to referring this legislation to a committee for consideration.

Not long after, in 1959, the house had before it the Farm Credit Act and, at that time, the Liberal opposition asked that it be referred to a committee; but the Conservatives, then sitting on the treasury benches, objected.

A little later in the same year the Crop Insurance Act came before the house. The Liberal opposition of that time asked that consideration of this legislation, which was imperfect—since it was Conservative legislation—be sent to a committee, and the government of that time, now the opposition, objected.

In 1961, when the Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act was being studied, the Liberal opposition asked that the legislation be sent to a committee, and then again, those on the treasury benches, those now in opposition, opposed that request.

Four times those who sit in opposition today objected to farm legislation being referred to a committee. And today they think they have to take the very opposite view, not to say an obstructionist stand, in order to try to stop the government from helping the farmers, and that for the sole pleasure of opposing the bill and asking that it be referred for study to a committee.

Mr. Speaker, the eastern farmers have waited and complained long enough; they
[Mr. Choquette.]

have long standing grievances and today it is time to act. We want to act without delay, we want to meet their needs adequately and I fail to see why this bill which cannot but contribute considerably to the prosperity of all Canadian farmers should be needlessly delayed.

The hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière says that what the farmers want is income and not credit. That is true but that is a somewhat fallacious argument because any man who wants to go into a business that will do well necessarily needs at the start enough credit so that his business can develop and expand.

Following modern technological developments, farm mechanization has become an essential need, a commanding necessity. With all the machinery they need, farmers can enlarge their holdings and, thus, get a higher income which is what the government wants them to have.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière also objected to the setting up of new corporations. The government does not intend to do any such thing, because we already have the Farm Credit Corporation which will be asked to look after farmers seeking loans.

However, I should like to bring one point to the attention of the minister. I should like the corporation to show more eagerness than it does at present, when it is asked for a loan. In fact, several farmers of my riding and some who live in the respective constituencies of my hon. friends rightly complain that the officials of the corporation take too much time to come and inspect their farms when they apply for a loan.

That is most unfair to farmers. The best way to speed up the processing of loans by the Farm Credit Corporation is to pass this legislation without referring it to a committee, since that would only delay its adoption.

Mr. Speaker, I have other remarks to make concerning this bill. In my opinion, the federal government does not give enough publicity to its legislation. I am not so sure it is advisable for the government to insert full page advertisements in large dailies to call the farmers' attention to the advantages of such legislation; I feel that efforts in that connection should rather be concentrated at the local level, so that farmers may take advantage of whatever benefits our legislation may offer.

Consequently, Mr. Speaker, even though I am against the amendment moved by the opposition, I felt I had to make these remarks