

Proposed Long Term Credit to Farmers

agricultural prices stabilization board. I say, and I think I can do so without fear of successful contradiction, that farm leaders across Canada would welcome the amendment that has been proposed. They would welcome the right to appoint representatives to the advisory committee who, in turn, would have the right without qualification to advise the government on policy matters. But the hon. member for Laurier says that is not acceptable; he does not want to give an advisory committee that much power.

Mr. Chevrier: He said no such thing.

Mr. Argue: Therefore, if the government should decide to oppose this amendment, and the minister should continue to oppose the amendment, if members of the Liberal party join with the government in opposing this amendment, then they will have to answer to farm organizations and farm leaders in this country, who not only support advisory boards but support boards advisory to the government and to the minister that have the authority in their own right to tender advice without waiting for something to be submitted to them by the minister.

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Chairman, the amendment which is before the committee seems to me to be a very simple one, and one which could be very easily defined. The hon. member for Assiniboia, unfortunately, instead of dealing with the amendment has dealt with a number of other things, and Your Honour has allowed him to do so.

The point which I am trying to make now, and which I tried to make earlier as briefly as I could in order to hasten the passage of what appears to us on this side of the house to be a measure which is commendable in itself, was this: What the amendment seeks to do is to ask the advisory committee to advise the minister as well as the board; so that under the circumstances there could be no doubt, in our mind at least nor is there any question, of the personnel of the advisory committee. This does not come up in the amendment, nor is it here for consideration.

If one looks at the definitions in clause 2 one has not got to be a Philadelphia lawyer in order to understand that the amendment now before the house is redundant in that the definition of the minister is given as that of the Minister of Agriculture. It strikes me, and I hope it will strike those who sit with us on this side of the house, that if the Minister of Agriculture is the responsible one for the appointment of the advisory board, then that advisory board will report to him. The minister will then be in a position to either accept or reject or ask for

[Mr. Argue.]

advice. On the amendment as it stands now, it is not a question of whether or not the personnel of the advisory committee should be considered, but as it reads it is simply this: That the advisory committee appointed under subsection one shall advise the corporation and the minister on matters of policy within the terms of the act.

My submission is that the clause as now formed contains what is in the amendment and for that reason the amendment is redundant.

Mr. Harkness: I have been trying to intrude myself into this argument for some time in what for me perhaps may be a somewhat unusual role, namely that of pourer of oil on troubled waters. If the hon. member will look at his amendment and at the clause that is written in the bill, I think he must come to the conclusion that his amendment is redundant. What else can the board advise the minister on? What else would they be asked to advise on except policy matters? They are certainly not going to advise whether Jones gets a loan of \$20,000 or \$15,000, individual cases as I think the hon. member for Kootenay West stated. In other words, the purpose of the advisory committee is to give advice on policy matters. That is why they are there. That is really the only type of advice that they can give. They cannot give advice with regard to individual cases. Therefore to write in or to try to write in, as the hon. member has done "shall advise the corporation and the minister on matters of policy within the terms of the act" is a procedure which, as the hon. member for Laurier has said, makes the language completely redundant and does nothing. In other words, I submit that all this argument has been really over practically nothing. Instead of wasting our time on something that is not material, I think we should get on with the other clauses of the bill.

Mr. Howard: We listened very carefully both to the comments from the hon. member for Laurier and those of the minister just recently on the question of redundancy or whether the idea behind the amendment is already contained in the clause. I would suggest to the minister that if he is following the advice given to him by the hon. member for Laurier he is taking rather poor advice and that he would do better to consult the officials in front of him.

An hon. Member: What about those behind him?

Mr. Howard: Yes, and those behind him. I wish the minister would take that advice when it comes to important matters like