

tively. That is why we say the super priority route is the way to go.

There has been some concern as to what the super priority would apply to. Clearly we would have difficulty in supporting super priority against real estate and specific charges against specific assets. The concept of super priority refers to the floating charge which trust and insurance companies, the secured creditors, generally take. The charge is against the accounts receivable, stock in trade and work in progress. The small bits and pieces of tools and so on not covered by specific charges, the stuff that makes the business go, are enough. There was enough in the Maislin case. There could not be specific financial charges against the licences. How can you do that? Well, there was enough there to pay the wage earners off in full. They got a settlement but they should have been paid in full.

Maislin is the big case but it happens in all sorts of other cases. You have real estate salesmen who have put deals together and all of a sudden the bank pulls the plug on the whole operation. The bank takes the money because they say, after all, the accounts receivable are ours, they are pledged to secure a loan. The salesmen who put the deal together to make that money in the first place do not get anything and that has to stop. A travelling salesman out on the road is entitled to a claim. That is why, to some extent, we cannot cut back on the amount of \$4,000 that easily. Some of the evidence we are going to hear in committee will have to deal with the quantum. We cannot leave people with an intended priority forever; there must be some cap.

We are going to have to hear evidence with respect to consumer bankruptcies because they are covered under this Act for amounts up to \$20,000 on goods purchased. There has been some concern about that. We are going to have to hear evidence on how we get at situations where people have obviously organized their affairs to defraud, in a way, their creditors by going bankrupt. These are issues which have to be brought before us. We need a number of committee hearings; we have a lot of work to do. I commend the House adopt this Bill; let's get at it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): At this stage in our debate, there is a ten-minute period provided for questions and comments. Are there such questions? Then, resuming debate.

Mr. G. M. Gurbin (Bruce-Grey): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to follow my colleague who has just completed what I would have to say was a very well informed and enthusiastic identification of the Bill and its background, as was indeed the representation made by the Hon. Member for Cambridge (Mr. Speyer) who started the debate for our Party.

There are only four or five points I would like to make and I would like to focus most particularly on the agricultural scene. The first issue, as has been identified by others who have spoken, is that of urgency. I guess I will be excused if my enthusiasm or optimism for the successful completion of this Bill is somewhat constrained. Not for seeing this Bill into committee, Mr. Speaker, which I think can happen very

quickly, but in actually seeing a successful conclusion to this matter before the end of this Parliament.

• (1640)

The Minister indicated in her speech that there have been about 18 years of preparation for this Bill. I am not sure if that is exactly correct, but that is the figure she used. All through that time it has been very clear, particularly in the past few years, that there has been a growing need for legislation which is sensitive to the problems which people in Canada are facing today. There is a real need for legislation which is going to respond to identified needs in many specific areas. We can all work very hard toward the goal of seeing it completed and introduced as full legislation before the House adjourns in June. Given the performance and history of both the Bill and the current Government and its activities, I think we must view that with some skepticism.

The economic background which we have in Canada right now makes the urgency of this Bill even more pronounced. I would like to focus on agriculture and establish how agriculture is situated today. In about 1979-80 it became very clear, particularly in some areas of the country, that agriculture was experiencing a very significant cost-price freeze. That could be said to be true particularly of the red meat sector. However, as time has passed it has become clear that that had also been occurring in other sectors of agriculture. In fact, we were, and still are getting a very consistent message across the country today.

At that time Bill C-653 was introduced by a Private Member on the Government benches. That Bill was considered for a long period of time, until it became very clear that the Government itself did not feel that was the method it would like to use to respond to the problem of farm bankruptcies.

We had suggestions for an amendment to what was then Bill C-12, now Bill C-17. I will read that particular amendment into the record in a moment. That amendment was a successful consequence of many months of representations from all sectors of agriculture during the consideration of Bill C-653. It identified many problems in terms of lending institutions and producers as reflected upon by farm organizations and interest groups across the country.

The two other points in this Bill which I think are very important to agriculture have to do with the ten-day extension of time which was mentioned by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Cambridge. Another important point is the different legislative control of receiver actions.

For the record I would like to relate a little of the economic background of the farm situation as it has changed over the past few years. Farm input costs escalated by 115 per cent between 1976 and 1982. Net farm income as a portion of the gross farm income actually decreased by 27.4 per cent from 1965 to 1982. Bankruptcies are really only the tip of the problem. A better reflection may be the statistics of the Farm Credit Corporation in terms of loans and arrears. Of all the money that the Farm Credit Corporation has lent to agricul-