

Farm Machinery

sandy farm where only potatoes grow, suppose those three farmers form a syndicate in order to buy machinery. They are quite insolvent, not because they are dishonest, but because the income from their farm makes them insolvent. They ask for a loan to buy farm machinery under the provisions of the legislation now under study. What will happen if they cannot meet their obligations? They will get deeper into debt in the hope of growing perhaps I do not know what, on their farms, and being influenced by an excellent vendor who will tell them about the advantages of soil changed by a certain piece of powerful machinery which will enable them to increase their production. Will such action help the farmer and his children? I say no, Mr. Speaker.

The proposed legislation is also dangerous, because the farmer would have to mortgage his personal assets in case his two associates go bankrupt or become insolvent; the farmer would then risk losing everything he has because of the commitments he would have made.

If the minister would tell us that this experiment was tried in other countries, that the setting up of syndicates for the purchase of farm machinery was effective, that it was tried and resulted in real advantages, that it increased substantially the income of farmers, then we might wonder if we are in error or if the government is sincere. But such is not the case. We are told: here is another means to help farmers. After all, it is only another means at the disposal of the farmer to get himself into debt, and nothing in the legislation allows us to believe that he will be able to benefit from this legislative measure and increase his income following the setting up of this co-operative.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the problems the government experiences in order to satisfy somewhat the needs of the farming class, since it had promised so much and it gives so little. It is not with a measure such as this that agriculture will be saved, and I shall say more particularly in eastern Canada, for, if agriculture prospers in western Canada, it has become an alarm and a worry sign for the eastern farmers.

Mr. Speaker, when we see, for instance, the Minister of Agriculture taking no interest in measures which could effectively assist agriculture, we are not surprised when he introduces a measure liable to destroy even more the family farm, the ancestral land where agriculture was flourishing, whereas, today, those who operate those

farms are not farmers but agricultural merchants.

This is why I wanted to specify that this legislation should be analysed and scrutinized from the standpoints of yield and profit. I was therefore pleased to support the motion of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona. In the light of the information which may be provided by the agricultural experts and the farm machinery salesmen in the committee on agriculture and colonization, we may have more practical suggestions to offer to the minister before this legislation is passed, a legislation which by itself may be excellent but the administration of which may prove entirely inefficient and useless.

Mr. Auguste Choquette (Lotbinière): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the previous speaker and incidentally, I was more especially interested as my hon. friend belongs to a school of public speaking made famous by the former attorney general of the province of Quebec, Hon. Antoine Rivard. If I am reminded of one of our most distinguished judges of the Quebec appeal court today, I congratulate him on his elocution and thank him for his comments.

However, at the earnest request of the hon. member, I wish to take part in the debate to tell him that this legislation, like any other farm legislation proposed by this government, is not meant to destroy the family farm, but on the contrary, to strengthen and to restore it as well as to promote its development.

Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière seems to fear the idea of a syndicate. In my opinion, we cannot urge enough farmers, more especially those of the province of Quebec, to co-operate. Selfishness or self-centredness should not be stirred up among our farmers. On the contrary, they should be encouraged to co-operate with each other, because even though a farmer is entitled to his farm and to his holding, he does not have to live in reclusion.

On the contrary, he should co-operate with all his neighbours. I feel that our Quebec farmers have shown a lack of community spirit, of co-operation, because they had a tendency to be rather suspicious. It is encouraging to see a provision which must necessarily urge them to co-operate with each other in order to extend their holdings. That is why we cannot do otherwise than to gladly welcome this legislation.

The hon. member for Berthier-Maskinongé-Delanaudière is also a successful lawyer. He was so successful this afternoon that he managed to deliver a full speech without re-