

Supply—Defence Production

syndicates, which was approved last year under the previous minister of agriculture?

Mr. Benson: The Farm Machinery Syndicates Credit Act was proclaimed on December 11, 1964. At that time an advance of \$50,000 was obtained by the Farm Credit Corporation under section 82 of the Financial Administration Act to provide current operating funds for the purpose of administering the Farm Machinery Syndicates Credit Act. Funds were appropriated to this end by parliament in the 1964-65 final supplementary estimates. A further advance of \$75,000 was obtained in July, 1965. This advance was to be repaid at such times as parliament appropriates funds for such purposes. Here we are appropriating funds so they can repay the \$75,000.

Mr. Rapp: It is not an operating loss?

• (5:40 p.m.)

Mr. Benson: No. I am told there are only estimated figures at this time with regard to the financial results for the entire year.

Mr. Peters: Does the minister have before him the figures for the amount that has been lent for farm machinery syndicates and the number of farmers involved?

Mr. Benson: I do not have the number of farmers involved but business for the 1966-67 fiscal year is forecast at \$3 million.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Is the minister of the opinion that the farm machinery syndicates will continue to operate? According to reports last year and answers to questions I asked, it was not a success. Would the minister be able to tell us whether it will carry on in the coming year?

Mr. Benson: All I can say is that according to the notes I have been given by the Department of Agriculture it is forecast it will do \$3 million worth of business in 1966-67 so presumably it is going to continue.

Mr. Alkenbrack: According to answers to questions I put on the Order Paper last autumn, about 75 per cent of these loans were going to the province of Alberta. Would the minister be able to clarify the reasons for that?

Mr. Benson: I really could not do that. I do not have an analysis of the operation, which is the responsibility of the Minister of Agriculture. I am sure that if the question is brought up when the estimates of the Department of Agriculture are being considered either in the committee or in the house, which

should be in the very near future, the minister will have the officials of the operation give a full explanation.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Could the minister forecast, now that the Minister of Agriculture comes from a different province than Alberta, that the loans might be more fairly distributed across the dominion than they were last year?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Chairman, I could not really let that comment go without an answer. I sincerely believe that the fact the Minister of Agriculture was from Alberta would not in any way affect the granting of loans in Alberta, knowing the former minister as a person.

Mr. Kindt: In view of the fact that the question of loans in Alberta has been raised, it would be fine if the minister could obtain the amount of the loans made in Alberta. The minister has said this information is not available at the moment but I do not feel we should pass this item without an answer to that question.

Mr. Benson: As I mentioned previously, we are dealing here with the final supplementary estimates. We are not dealing with the main estimates for the year. I have undertaken to get the information. I do not have it here, I would have to get it from the Minister of Agriculture. The corporation is not going out of existence; it is going to continue. Hon. members will have every opportunity to question its operation fully, I am sure.

Item agreed to.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION

11e. Reimbursement of Queen's Printer's advance account for the value of stores which have become obsolete or unserviceable, \$44,477.

Mr. Irvine: I should like to ask the minister if he has information available on what stores of the Queen's Printer are covered by this particular item?

Mr. Benson: Yes, I have the details here. This is a reimbursement of the Queen's Printer's advance account for the value of stores which have become surplus, obsolete or unserviceable and were declared to Crown Assets Disposal Corporation for disposal. The material is as follows: Equipment maintenance stores—this item consists of spare parts for letter press—surplus; miscellaneous maintenance supplies—surplus and obsolete;