

Farm Credit Act

to a question put by the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar, the minister said that after consultation with the department of Indian affairs and Indian band may well be able to borrow \$500,000. I should like to read my amendment again for the benefit of members of the committee. It is:

That all the words after "shall" in line 3, page 5, paragraph (4) be deleted and the following substituted therefor: "be determined by agreement between the corporation and the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, with the approval of the governor in council.

• (4:50 p.m.)

I should have added the words "and consultation with the band concerned". I will not delay the house by suggesting a subamendment to my own amendment, but in hurriedly drafting the amendment I left out those words.

I hope hon. members paid close attention to the minister's answer to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar. He suggested that if a band came to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development it could obtain loans of \$500,000. All I am suggesting is that we should not place a ceiling on one band. If we interpret this clause the way the minister wants us to interpret it we will not have one band forming an association. This is difficult to envisage.

The band on the reservation in my constituency would like to take over the farming of their own land. They have section after section of the very best land in south central Alberta. In order to give hon. members some idea of what I am talking about let me tell them that the crop on this reservation amounts to approximately 250,000 bushels, or about one-sixth of what the white man produces. These people have reached the stage where they want to become the farmers and farm this land as an Indian band.

The minister suggests there is a \$100,000 limit and that this applies to the land owned or occupied by an Indian band. By adopting this provision we will be breaking up these Indian bands into four or five little co-operatives. They will have to do so in order to borrow \$100,000 each. What are we trying to do, split them up and get them squabbling among themselves? There is no real purpose to this clause. It will force these Indian bands to divide and form small co-operatives. There will be one co-operative operating one section of land, another on another section of land and still another on another section. As one hon. member suggested, the minister is talking with a forked tongue. Whether he is doing

[Mr. Horner.]

that or not, he is talking with very little knowledge of how these Indian band would like to operate.

I urge the minister and the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo to support my amendment. I know full well that he is aware of the situation to which I refer. I do not have to converse with him about this problem and I know that he is in agreement with what I have said. This provision will drive these Indian bands to form five, six or seven different co-operatives in order to obtain \$500,000 for each legal entity. All I am suggesting by the amendment is that we should not put a ceiling on the amount.

When you consider the ten sections occupied by the Blackfoot Indian band you must realize that \$100,000 is not enough to buy the equipment to farm that area. That Indian band has no equipment at all at this time. Surely we do not want them to divide in order to take advantage of some white man's stupid regulation. That is just about what the Indian will think about it. This is just more red tape created by government bureaucracy. Surely the minister can understand that.

It is my hope that the minister can accept my amendment which merely suggests that the amount of money allowable to an Indian band should be determined by agreement between the corporation, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and the Indian band. This is not an impossible request. I sincerely hope it will be accepted.

I shall not delay the committee any longer, but I hope the hon. member for Kamloops-Cariboo and the Minister of Agriculture will realize that this is a reasonable thing. I am sure they will both understand that if they vote against this amendment they will force these Indian bands to divide in order to take advantage of this provision. They will then understand that I was right in my suggestion. A measure with a limitation of this kind is not good in principle.

Mr. Burton: Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words on clause 6 and the amendment thereto. I certainly think all hon. members will recognize this provision as a belated but welcome move. I can only consider for my own part that the government is trying to make a genuine move in response to considerable pressure for programs to enable Indians to improve their economic condition. There is no question that such measures are required