

Farm Credit Act

wheat pool bought out a private industry or a private grain handling company bought out a wheat pool.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I think to some extent the hon. member for Crowfoot has made a point. However, I think there is a relationship between farm credit and matters that affect the farming community generally and I think the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre is in order.

Mr. Benjamin: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Crowfoot for raising that point. If he had raised it in the middle of his own speech he would have had a point of order. I repeat the point I was making. Members of the official opposition have been running around this chamber for the last couple of months trying to be on both sides of this question. But they can no longer have it both ways. At least my colleagues to my left, who are on the extreme right, take a position. However, when it comes to farm credit, on the one hand the Tories are saying that they have to protect the family farm and in the next breath they say, "But don't let those farmer-owned and operated outfits get too big, because this will mean they won't need as much credit, that there will be less need for the Farm Credit Corporation".

I was interested in the speech of the hon. member for Lisgar who spoke about small farms and I hope that he meant what he said this afternoon. Because if he is correct and if—heaven forbid—we ever have a Tory government again, then the national grain company will have to get out of the business of hog raising. Make no bones about it, Mr. Speaker, it must be one or the other.

• (2130)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Crowfoot is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Horner: Let me make it abundantly clear to you and the House, Mr. Speaker, that the national grain company and Mr. Heffelfinger are not friends of the Tory party. Mr. Heffelfinger is more of a Liberal party bedfellow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I believe the hon. member for Crowfoot is entering the debate.

Mr. Benjamin: I am glad to hear that the Tory party is not in bed with the national grain company, or Mr. Heffelfinger or with the hogs.

Mr. Horner: That is exactly right.

Mr. Lang: He didn't say that.

An hon. Member: You have your Waffles.

Mr. Benjamin: We are kind of proud of them because they at least say what they are.

An hon. Member: They are pretty hoggish, too.

Mr. Benjamin: It is the ones who waffle from one side to the other that bother me. Just for the hell of it, Mr. Speaker, let us get back to farm credit. The hon. member for Lisgar quoted the president of the National Farmers Union. There is a real right-wing Tory for you and I find it amusing that if they want to be on both sides of the

question they have to quote the president of National Farmers Union.

What the Tories forgot to quote from the president of the National Farmers Union is that the whole question of farm credit and the Farm Credit Corporation is not much good unless we have a national government that will do something about farm income and farm costs. Unless that happens, it does not matter whether we have the Grits or the Tories—and we have had one or the other for over 100 years. In the last 25 years, in spite of protests by the so-called Tory cowboys from the Prairies we have lost 400,000 family farm units in Canada. That has happened since 1945 even though we were unlucky enough to have a Tory government instead of a Liberal government during part of that time. Nothing changed when we had a Tory government.

I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski). He made a speech today which I thought worthy of his holding an NDP membership card. I hope that statement does not cost him any votes. I am glad he said several things about farm efficiency and farm income, but I wonder why he did not ask why the farmers who increased their efficiency so much did not reap some of the benefits of this free enterprise system. Why did they lose so many family farms in Saskatchewan while at the same time productivity increased?

Unless the nation is prepared to approve subsidies directed at increasing farm income, farm credit goes down the drain. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave) put his finger on the situation when he said that something had to be done about farm income and farm costs because the policy of \$100,000 in loans at 7 per cent or 8 per cent interest is a policy of bankruptcy.

There must be a substantial change in policies for rural Canada. Any government of this country must realize there is something fundamental, civilized, human, decent and economic about a viable rural community. I am not talking just about farms but the towns and villages that service them, the small cities that service the towns and villages and the factories in those large cities that service the small towns, villages, farms and so on down the line.

Many countries in the world deliberately use part of their natural wealth to keep people out of metropolitan centres. Many of my friends in this House have suggested that if for no other reason than to save dollars we must maintain these people on the land. There is another reason for keeping the people on the land even if you have to subsidize them two or three years out of five. It is more civilized, justifiable, humane and it saves dollars to keep them on the land rather than move them into Saskatoon, Regina, Toronto, Winnipeg or anywhere else. And that is where they want to be.

I wish the Minister of Agriculture were here during the debate on his bill, because he is the one who refuses to do anything about farm costs. The hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar and myself raised the matter of fertilizer costs. We pointed out that farmers in Ontario and the western provinces are suffering at the hands of a cartel. At that time he shrugged his shoulders and said that if we had anything more than hearsay, he would be glad to look into it. I asked him to look into the situation a year ago. I sent him evidence of a fertilizer manufacturer in the city

[Mr. Horner.]