

Farm Credit Act

The farmer's son is no longer interested in taking over his father's farm. Why? Because at the present time, in Quebec, in the maritime provinces and in some other provinces, a farmer's real income stands barely at four cents an hour, considering the number of hours he devotes to the operation of his farm. And were we to get him deeper into debt tomorrow, I do not believe that would solve his problem. But one solution the government could bring to the Canadian farmers' problem would be to guarantee those of eastern Quebec, Ontario and the maritime provinces that their products would be sold.

Mr. Chairman, it is my opinion that if the government offered that guarantee, we would not have to worry about the rest. Then we would have an opportunity to see that farmers in Quebec and in Canada can look after their own business. That policy would bring about the development of farms and would help to increase production. Instead of paying farmers to keep from growing wheat, let us pay for the production achieved in this country, let us build cold storage facilities in eastern Canada to keep food commodities and if we cannot consume our national production, let us go to the international market; that way, we will be helping Canadian farmers.

We are in favour of assisting farmers but at the same time, we fear the consequences of such a policy because of our present monetary system.

It is obvious that the farmer will be in financial difficulties within a few years, just as he is now. We have proof of it in Quebec and in the other provinces where farm credit has been established, because farmers wrack their brains every six months, never knowing if they will manage to meet their obligations or make the instalment on their farm loan. Why? Because they cannot sell their products.

Mr. Chairman, we must see to the establishment of farmers' sons and enable them to have the same standard of living as the other classes of society, because I am of the opinion that Canadian farmers are the most ignored people at the present time, the least recognized and even the most badly treated.

I suggest very humbly to the minister to study the possibility of submitting a measure that would guarantee to the farmer, for instance, the sale of his butter, as is done already in some areas for the sale of eggs, or apples, or even fish in the maritime provinces. Let us guarantee the sale of these products and I am sure that we shall then be on the road to prosperity, not only for Canadian farmers but for all the social classes of our country.

[Mr. Caouette.]

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Chairman, may I ask the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) a question? Would he tell the house if it would not be better to settle present agricultural problems through the media of agricultural co-operatives and organizations, such as the C.F.U.? In other words, would it not be better if the government intervened only indirectly without substituting itself to private enterprise and co-operatives?

Mr. Caouette: I shall be pleased to answer the hon. member for Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm (Mr. Pigeon).

You are quite right. We can work through the existing agricultural co-operatives and organizations. There is no question of doing away with them. The government should act through such intermediaries to market our agricultural production but it should do so by getting something better than starvation prices for our farmers. Far from having to sell at a loss, our farmers should make a profit.

I am quite in favour of working through the C.F.U. or similar agricultural co-operatives and organizations. In fact, those farm organizations share my opinion 100 per cent. All they are looking for is the marketing of our farm production at advantageous prices.

(Text):

Mr. Rapp: Mr. Chairman, in rising to speak on the amendment introduced by the Minister of Agriculture to increase the lending capacity of the Farm Credit Corporation from \$300 million to \$400 million, I should like to say at the outset that I am much in favour of what is spelled out in the resolution. Looking at the history of the farm loan board as it operated up to November, 1959, I must say that it served agriculture very well but since the Farm Credit Corporation came into being under the amendment at that time it has served Canadian farmers much better.

Much has been said during this debate by hon. members, some of whom have contradicted statements by the Minister of Agriculture and have said that the corporation has not served the economy as well as it should have. Therefore I should like to let another person speak, namely, Mr. David Suderman, Ottawa editor of the *Family Herald*, who had this to say in an article in the March 8 issue:

If the Conservative government decides to stand solely on its record in this year's federal election, one big vote drawing card in rural ridings will be the achievements of the Farm Credit Corporation. Other farm legislation, such as the Agricultural