

Supply

dollars and cents coming into my community, into Essex County and into Kent County, to be far diminished.

This year I understand if we were to look at the local situation in Essex County alone, we are talking about 40 to 60 per cent of our farm community in dire financial straits. Half the people in Essex County in agriculture are in dire straits. Essex and Kent counties are, without a doubt, the best agricultural producing counties in this country, and yet they feel this pressure, they feel these problems.

Why has this occurred? We know that there are disastrously low prices throughout the world on many, many commodities. A colleague of mine, Ralph Ferguson, has written a document using Statistics Canada documents and co-ordinated that material. He has called it *Compare the Share*. In this document he very clearly points out that we have farm commodity products which are basically the same price today that they were ten years ago. Minor increases in some of those products, but the cost to the consumer out of the farm is the same. Our consumers, looking on the grocery shelf, would never visualize that to be the case. We have seen high increases in the products that Canadian consumers are buying, yet at the farm gate those prices have not increased.

When I look at the soya bean, the corn and the winter wheat commodities in Essex County alone, we have a \$40 million loss in just those three commodities.

I think that when we realize that and we add to it—the vegetable processing industry down \$6 million in 1989 figures and the tender fruit industry down \$1.6 million—we certainly realize that there is a disaster in my area.

We can look at how the farm is operating in a riding such as mine. What have the farmers done over the last four years when they have had disastrous conditions and disastrously low prices because of climate? They have gone out and borrowed money to plant more crops. They

have borrowed money to make sure that the debts on the farm are paid.

As a result, all the past reserves of funds they have are now gone. Older farmers who have retired have taken money out of what they considered their retirement funds, and have put it in to help the younger people who are farming in my area.

When we look at the total situation, we certainly realize that our farm community today cannot survive if it does not receive some pretty strong help very quickly.

Off farm income is being affected as well. Many farmers kept their farms going by working in the small store, in the manufacturing industry or by having a job in a factory. That is not happening today. In my riding of Essex—Kent because of free trade, because of the recession, many of those jobs have been lost.

We are talking about thousands of jobs lost in almost every community throughout my area. At the same time, the small business person is feeling a tremendous amount of pressure because that small business is not having the same dollars flow into it.

People are being laid off in the manufacturing sector. People who are not receiving decent farm incomes are not buying the products in small stores. They are not buying the products on main street in small towns.

The result is those merchants are suffering tremendously as well. They are laying people off, and therefore, what might be considered a job that a farm wife, son or farmer himself could have has been lost in my riding. Add to that, the cross-border shopping crisis and you have a major disaster, one that we really must look at and treat very carefully.

It is not a situation where we can sit back and say: "Well, we put a program in place and there will be dollars coming next year to answer some of these problems." That is nonsense.

We applauded the putting into place of the GRIP and NISA programs to help the farm community. However, from the 1991 crop, no dollars appear except in some possible interim payment. No dollars appear until 1992.