

## **Conclusions**

**Having heard and carefully considered the testimony of the witnesses who appeared before it, the Committee concludes that:**

1. Soil degradation is a serious problem in *all* regions of Canada.
2. There is insufficient awareness of the existence and the severity of the problem within all sectors of society.
3. Because there is insufficient awareness of soil degradation, the solution of the problem has not been a priority.
4. Canada risks permanently losing a large portion of its agricultural capability if a major commitment to conserving the soil is not made immediately by all levels of government and by all Canadians.

**Therefore, the Committee further concludes that:**

5. Soil conservation cannot be dealt with in isolation from related issues such as water quality, land use, wildlife management, fisheries and forestry.
6. Because of the complexity of the issue and the ramifications that policies set at all levels of government have on soil conservation, a valid conservation effort demands policy and program coordination.
7. Existing policies, not necessarily directed at soils, can have the effect of discouraging good soil management.
8. There is a need for further basic research on the causes and effects of soil degradation.
9. There is also an overwhelming need for practical, on-the-ground research to determine (a) the costs of degradation to the farmer and (b) the costs and the benefits of the use of conservation practices on the farm.
10. While there is a great deal of information available about soil conservation, the transfer of this information and the accompanying technology to the farmer is the key to a successful conservation effort.
11. The practical technical information and expertise necessary to adapt conservation practices to individual farms is often unavailable to farmers because existing agricultural exten-