

I think one myth which exists in this country is that Canada has a large amount of good soil. The fact is that there are only 24 million acres of agricultural land in Canada. Only about 2 million of those acres fall into the category of first-class soil, while about 10 million acres fall in the second class. We might ask ourselves, what seems to be the problem? The problem is that when industry develops, it does so right in the heart of agricultural land. This should not come as a surprise. In the historical context we find that very often cities are built right in the midst of prime soil. Our great cities on the prairies, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Lethbridge, Red Deer and Edmonton—which essentially, with the exception of Calgary, include every major city—were built right in the middle of old geological lakebeds, on silted-out soil; some of the finest soil we have. While all of that takes place, about 12,000 people a day die of starvation or malnutrition. In this situation, I think we can simply say this: neither this country nor any other country can afford to give up a single square inch of agricultural land for non-agricultural use without first making the important decision as to whether or not there is an alternative.

Because it might seem that there are other alternatives, we might ask whether cities should be allowed to expand over a space if under that space there are known to be tar sands, copper ore, iron ore or any other kind of resource. The fact is that because the cities do extend across agricultural land, farming is viewed as a life style rather than an industry, because no other industry would allow its resource to be simply taken away, especially when the need for them is so great.

There is another myth, that is, that in Canada there is a great deal of good land. The fact is that if this country doubled its population by the year 1995, we would have tremendous difficulty feeding ourselves at the level of nutrition we now enjoy. The situation is extremely serious. While we see acres and acres of prime land being used as backfill for factories and for places on which to build houses, we find elsewhere a situation such as was described to me by a friend who worked for CUSO. He worked in a leper colony. While there, he sent a sample of soil to be tested. When it was returned he found that it contained no nitrogen, no phosphorous and no potassium.

At the same time, we in Canada have no ethical value for what is the most important of our resources. It is so important, in fact, that in the 50,000 years man has inhabited this earth he has had, in each and every day, food or has been in search of food. It is only in the last 100 or 200 years that resources such as oil and iron ore have been popularly used. In no way would we put in roadbeds, or develop cities in areas where there are only mines, without any thought for protecting the areas in which they exist.

Another thing I can say about the agricultural industry which shows it has not had the protection it should, is that in 1964 the farmer's portion of the food dollar was 42 per cent. In 1967 it was only 40 per cent. In 1971 it was 36 per cent of what we spent on food. In order to bring to the attention of the House and to those who think that the farmer is getting a good return for his grain, I would point out that only 3½ cents of the price of a 25-cent loaf of bread is received by the farmer. That means that on what

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is normally a 25-cent loaf of bread we would still have to pay 21.5 cents if the farmer gave his wheat away. I think it behooves us to recognize on that point that the prices of agricultural products have not been as high as we assume them to be. Also of importance is to know that the output per man on our farms has increased threefold in the last 20 years. By comparison, other industries have increased by only 1.7 fold. This is a piece of information which again points out the necessity of giving our agricultural producers a higher status than they presently enjoy.

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Lately we have heard references to putting consumers on marketing boards such as CEMA. I do not oppose that in principle, but I think we should ask ourselves the following question about the agricultural situation: Why is it that when it comes to the consumption of food we give a different status to agriculture? To be sure, when we look at situations such as exist in the automobile industry and the farm machinery industry, the consumer certainly has no say with regard to what the price of those products ought to be. If we treated farming as we treat other industries, we would pay it the same respect as all other industries. If we believe that the consumer has the right to speak out, we should grant the same right to everyone throughout industry.

I also think we discriminate against agriculture by the establishment of unfair freight rates such as those which exist in a large portion of the farm producing area, namely, the prairie provinces. When you consider that it costs twice as much to ship processed rapeseed-meal from Toronto to Lethbridge as it does to ship the raw rapeseed from Lethbridge to Toronto on the same rolling stock, you realize that obviously something is wrong, to the extent that we should ask ourselves where the whole agricultural processing industry is bound to be, because we have to compete against an unfair freight system. When we consider that it is possible to ship products from Toronto to Vancouver and back to Calgary cheaper than sending them directly to Calgary, we realize that the prairie provinces are in jeopardy because they simply cannot compete. That is partly what is stifling the area. While the rationale for cheaper rates to the west coast is based on competition with the water route, the fact is that competition does not really exist in the landlocked provinces. Trucks simply cannot compete with water transportation.

With regard to the status of agriculture, I should like to say that the need for food is so great that the world has not yet really measured the crisis in which it finds itself. We must realize that an additional 77 million people are born in India every year. That is almost four times the present population of Canada. There is no way in which we can neglect the importance of giving agriculture a very high status and the importance of pouring an increasing amount of money into the development of agricultural research, for undoubtedly in that area we find the most important problems facing us today.

The government must abandon its placid attitude while going amidst the haste and noise, because the fact is this universe is not unfolding as it should. Although 12,000 people a day are dying of starvation, those who are studying the problem say that this number is insignificant in the perspective of what will happen. It is even more