

have been required to bear by this government, that even one penny more is too much.

Canadian farmers have borne too much of the cost of this government's deficit reduction. It is time that this government stood up and committed itself to helping Canadian farmers.

In conclusion, we have asked this minister and this government to bring in a new bill, to bring it at a later date so as to take effect in the new crop year and allow producers to voice their concerns and their suggestions. The minister has recently announced a national agri-food policy conference to take place in December. He says that he wants to work closely with the provinces, the farm organizations and others to plan and implement an improved policy framework.

Let me suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is an ideal opportunity for this minister to put his words into action. Consult with the farming groups, listen to what they have to say and change this program which adversely affects all Canadian farmers and all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Carleton—Gloucester (Mr. Bellemare), on questions or comments.

**Mr. Bellemare:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Hon. Member on his excellent speech. He showed the kind of sensitivity that the Minister of Agriculture seems to lack. His knowledge of the subject is exceptional. He has demonstrated his wholehearted support for Canada's farmers, and I would like to ask him how the Minister could communicate and establish a certain dialogue with the farming community in order to get some input.

[*English*]

**Mr. Speller:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for that question.

It is not too hard for the Minister of Agriculture to go into the rural areas and speak to the farmers. There are all kinds of different farming groups that have come out against this bill. He did not have to bring out the bill. He could have consulted first with the different farming groups. He could have said that they have to do some

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deficit reduction and asked where it would best fit in, instead of cutting a program which costs very little in terms of the global budget. It costs \$27 million, but that \$27 million does a great amount for tobacco farmers, corn farmers, soybean farmers and farmers in all of Canada. The value you get for that \$27 million is worth everything to farmers.

I thank my hon. friend for the question. The minister could have consulted with farmers prior to bringing in this program. Instead, just like the rest of the government ministers, it seems that he brings in the program, brings in the changes, makes the adverse effects and then says: "Oh, well maybe now we will consult". That is not the way to do it. I am sure that is not the way this side of the House would work.

**Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address Bill C-36, not as an agricultural expert by any means, but as somebody who is very concerned about the implications of the bill and the impact that it will have on farmers, not only in my riding of Northumberland but across the country.

To me this bill represents a sleazy way in which our government is continuing to get rid of agricultural support for farmers and is failing again to provide the necessary support to a very vital industry in our country. I think it is necessary to have an understanding of just what this bill is addressing, and to do that you have to look at the program as it was before. I think that bringing in revised provisions to this act at this time is very poor judgment on the part of our government.

The intent of the bill is to help farmers to store product, to have an orderly marketing process for their products allowing them favourable prices for their products over an extended period of time. The government brought in this bill two days before the House recessed in June and then reintroduced it in September for debate after farmers had actually started to bring their crops in off the field and to store them, assuming that this act was in place, as it should have been by tradition, to support them. It then withdrew the bill because it realized that it was so flawed, and reintroduced it again. The bill that we are debating right now should be referring, if it is to be debated, to government action for next year, not the current year.