

Government Orders

intangible and valuable coin, that of the survival of the family farm.

• (1230)

Passage of this legislation would mean higher costs for farmers at a time when our family farm is under siege already, as we can see daily in the reports of farm foreclosures and bankruptcies.

Farming organizations in western Canada estimate that eliminating the interest free component of the program will increase borrowing costs in the range of \$1,500 to \$2,000 per year per farm. Skyrocketing interest rates resulting from the government's irresponsible fiscal policies will play their part in crushing farmers under growing debt. Government savings simply do not translate into farmer savings.

In other words, without the interest free aspect, the advance payments program will be rendered virtually useless to farmers.

The Ontario Corn Producers Association which, in the past years, has seen approximately 2,000 producers participate in the program has stated that eliminating the interest free provision will result in an ineffectual program with minimal participation.

What is this government's true motive in proposing this measure? It is true that if producers are discouraged from participating and the program dies from neglect then the government will save money. Is this the true plan? The destruction of the interest free advance payment program is only a step in the federal government's increasingly obvious assault on the family farm in Canada.

Cutbacks in transportation subsidies, budgets for dairy export programs and support for organizations such as the Canadian Dairy Commission, to name but a few, have resulted in farmers losing \$400 million in support structures since the last election. This is not even counting the damage that Bill C-36 promises to do.

Industries such as wine and tobacco are floundering. Marketing boards have been drastically weakened. The effects of the free trade agreement hold little promise for the farmers of this country.

While the government pays lip service to the preservation of the family farm in Canada, it cripples its future by

destroying these mechanisms which have allowed it to survive thus far in a cut-throat global market-place.

We have seen countless times this government's disregard for ordinary Canadians, its abdication from the unemployment insurance program, its gutting of our national rail system, its multi-pronged attack on Atlantic Canada and, most recently, in its proposed goods and services tax. That this government pays heed only to big business is painfully obvious. We need not be surprised but certainly angered by its attack on the family farm.

The interest free cash advance program has not only bolstered the Canadian marketing system to the benefit of producers, but to the benefit of millions of consumers as well. These ordinary consumers will also suffer from the destruction of this program.

With interest growing on their debts from harvest time onward, farmers will naturally be under great pressure to sell all of their produce and begin paying off their massive debts immediately, especially considering the high interest rates. The result will be low prices and spiraling debts for producers, a swamped quota system which, until now, has been the envy of the world and subsequent higher prices for consumers due to produce shortages next spring. This, in turn, necessitates higher imports from the U.S. which are often of an aged and inferior quality. This will be the result of a badly controlled market which this government's policy will create.

The government has tried to foist its guilt off on this side of the House belating that by our determination to save the existing advance payment program through debate we are only delaying urgently needed payments to farmers. If so, how does the government explain the dozens of producer organizations that have joined us in insisting that this bill is badly flawed? How does this government explain the fact that the Prince Edward Island Federation of Agriculture, the Ontario Corn Producers Association, the Western Canadian Wheat Growers Association and many other organizations have expressly requested that the government not implement this bill?

Such respected bodies such as the Advisory Committee to the Canadian Wheat Board unanimously resolved to recommend that the federal government operate the cash advance program as usual for the 1989-90 crop year