

of farm bankruptcies in Canada has increased by 20 per cent from 1982 to the end of 1983. That is only the most obvious sign of serious trouble in agriculture. There is little question that many victims of Liberal policy need some recourse, as do victims of many other disasters, but patching up the wounds will not address the fundamental issues nor correct the negligence and abuse, nor will it smooth political speeches. Agri-bonds, Mr. Speaker, would be a positive step. Why will the Government not take that step?

● (1710)

On that basis, Mr. Speaker, at the conclusion of my remarks I would like to ask that the following motion be considered by the House pursuant to Standing Order 8(4)(a):

That this House continue to sit beyond the ordinary hour of adjournment for the purpose of continuing consideration of Private Member's Notice of Motion No. 35.

That is the motion now before the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): I will read Standing Order 8 as follows:

When the Speaker is in the Chair, a Member may propose a motion, without notice, to continue a sitting through a lunch or dinner hour or beyond the ordinary hour of daily adjournment for the purpose of considering a specified item of business or a stage or stages thereof subject to the following conditions:

(i) The motion must relate to the business then being considered provided that proceedings in any Committee of the Whole may be temporarily interrupted for the purpose of proposing a motion under the provisions of this Standing Order.

(b) In putting the question on such motion, the Speaker shall ask those Members who object to rise in their places. If twenty-five or more Members then rise, the motion shall be deemed to have been withdrawn, otherwise, the motion shall have been adopted.

Those Members who object to the motion as proposed by the Hon. Member for Bruce-Grey (Mr. Gurbin) will please stand.

And fewer than 25 Members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): There being fewer than 25 Hon. Members standing, the motion is adopted.

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to make a few comments on the motion before the House. This motion makes one wonder, Mr. Speaker, where the priorities are of Hon. Members of this House of Commons when they fail to recognize the severe plight which is facing the agriculture industry in Canada today. At farm meetings in my riding there is a constant complaint made by farmers, whether they be grain farmers, hog producers, or cattle producers, that is, they feel they are receiving very little support from the law makers of this country, particularly as it relates to farm financing.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that the input costs for farming today have risen astronomically. We all know, or at least we should know, that the farmer is one of the last primary producers in our country who believes in the free enterprise system and who gambles absolutely everything he owns on producing the food which we eat three times a day, if we are not unemployed. We cannot eat oil, Mr. Speaker. We cannot eat machinery which is produced in the great manufacturing centres. The primary

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producer of food keeps us moving and we must rely on him. He produces wealth from the ground by his own initiative. When he starts out he has absolutely nothing but hope for the commodity he is going to produce either by seed or through a cow-calf operation. We are not—I repeat, we are not—supporting this vast group of producers across the country.

My colleague who spoke before me indicated some of the hardships which are faced in financing a farm operation. He pointed out that there is only one way that young people today have post-secondary education and go to agricultural colleges can practise what they learned, that is, by farming. And there is only one way they can get into farming today, and that is, if they inherit the land base or farm to work from.

We give assistance, Mr. Speaker, to small business and to large corporations in central Canada. We give assistance by way of tax breaks and incentives to the oil industry. All of these things may be necessary. Why, then, are we not giving assistance to the farming communities across the country? If we in this House of Commons are not prepared to face this problem, and face it squarely, we will rue the day, because the day will come when the farmers will say, "It is no use. I am going to leave the farm". They will then let the land go back to being unproductive.

In northeastern Alberta and northwestern Alberta the provincial government is attempting now to open up new farm lands because it realizes with the expansion of cities and with the expansion of industry, and with airports being built on prime agricultural land, it is only marginal land which is available, the grey wooded soil, and that requires much more input cost in the form of fertilizer, machinery and equipment. There is a great need in the form of knowledge about agriculture which young people and agriculturalists are passing on to the industry. I point that out because over the past two or three years the input cost to the producers has gone up drastically—in some cases it has gone up 50 per cent and 60 per cent—but their incomes have dropped significantly, to the point where in many cases they cannot meet the obligations they have with the banking institutions, the trust companies and even with the Farm Credit Corporation. Some of those producers, Mr. Speaker, are locked into loans at interest rates far in excess of what is available in the open market today. Really, the Farm Credit Corporation has not become a corporation which assists farmers. In many cases it has become just the opposite. The Farm Credit Corporation has become the weight around the neck of the farmer and it is dragging him down into the manure.

We must face the problem which is outlined, and I can see one solution proposed by western producers as being the agri-bond. The agri-bond would make it possible for farmers to pass on to their children, or to other young people who want to take up farming as a profession, the holdings they have and still realize their moneys from the sale. They will then not be faced with a massive grab through the capital gains tax. The agri-bond would encourage the farming community, the seasoned farmer who broke the land in many cases and who has operated well under trying conditions, to invest in the future