

Agriculture

his ancestors came to the area because that was where the industry was, he said that history is repeating itself. The minister should keep this in mind when we talk about agriculture.

● (1640)

We must be aggressive in this field. We are forgetting that the entire lifestyle in agriculture has changed. People in the country want to enjoy the same things enjoyed by those in the city, and rightly so. They want leisure time and vacations. Our forefathers worked 12 to 18 hours a day on the family farm. The little red schoolhouse is gone. The farm children are bused to the larger schools where they mix with other people.

There is only one lifestyle today. There is not the city, town or country lifestyle which we had years ago. It used to be said "This boy comes from the country". Now we are all one. This is why we have to change our methods and our ideas concerning agriculture.

The minister and the government are forgetting about the increased cost of land. I will have something to say about the minister later. I know I am talking about something closer to his area than mine when I refer to an example in Dover township. I remember a chap who bought a farm 15 to 20 years ago for \$60,000. The farm cannot be subdivided or developed in any way other than for agriculture. It is a low-lying area bordering the St. Clair River. When he sold the farm last year, he got \$1.25 million for it. How could anyone in agriculture today on 200 acres even make the interest on that money? That is something the minister is forgetting about.

This industry needs proper supervision because of the many pitfalls. Let us look at machinery costs. When our forefathers settled this country, they used the services of the poor, humble horse which in return only required a flake of hay and a bucket of oats. It might have cost \$125 or maybe less. The machinery that went with it cost very little more. To work the farm today, one of the cheaper tractors runs to \$60,000. Most run to well over \$100,000.

Mr. Bloomfield: That's not right.

Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): I have some knowledge of tractors. I know that smaller tractors can be bought. I am talking about the farmer who goes out today to buy a tractor.

Mr. Bloomfield: That's not right.

Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Well, I do not know the hon. member's background, but I do not think I am too far out on this. I know of many farmers who have paid \$60,000 and they think they still have a small tractor. I do not think I am too far wrong.

What about financing and interest rates? How can we expect these people to have that kind of money? What does it cost to operate a farm? A while ago we heard from a chap who was paying \$80,000 in interest on money for a feedlot. Are we

forgetting all this? Yet the farmer does not qualify under the Small Businesses Loans Act.

Farming is industry. Some farming is big industry. This gracious government had all the answers in December, 1979. What is the cost of fuel to the farmer today? Diesel fuel costs have increased by 62 cents. What does my friend across the aisle have to say about that? It was his party in opposition which told us how to run the country. Where are their promises today? Why should the people have any confidence in this government? What about their promise for a better society which they made in the winter of 1980?

Last week I received a phone call from a farmer in my constituency. He not only complained about the high interest rates. I am not a corn grower; however, he asked me to bring this to the attention of the members of this House. He said that for a 45 gallon drum of Lastle corn spray he paid \$1,000. I suppose this product has its origin in the chemical industry. In all fairness, I should mention that it probably would be diluted with water, but it is still pretty expensive spray for the corn field. This farmer will be meeting with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) tomorrow in Toronto along with the provincial minister of agriculture.

This is one of the plights our farmers are facing today. We have been ignoring this industry. We bend the knee to the motor car companies and other manufacturers which do not make as great a financial contribution to the economy of this country as the farmer. There are those who think the farmer's price is fixed in the world market. Price setting is beyond his control. All he can do is lower his cost of production. How can farmers do that? The cost of their tractors, fuel, and everything else is increasing. The increases are staggering. For some, the only option is to sell their assets and their farm and try to salvage something before they lose everything. We should have begun to help this depressed industry long ago.

I now want to refer to the chain store and the specials they carry in the red meat sector. Last week pork was selling in some chains at the following prices: liver, 29 cents a pound; pork hocks, 49 cents a pound. The consumer cannot keep this meat forever. He could not buy it last week and have it for the rest of his life. Picnic pork shoulder roasts sold at 89 cents a pound; pork butt roasts at 99 cents a pound; pork legs, 99 cents; pork loin roasts, \$1.29; pork butt chops \$1.19; loin chops, \$1.89; and side ribs, \$1.49. What is the cost of production of that animal? Stop and think about that. The farmer probably received 63 cents live weight.

Let us now deal with the beef industry. The chains go in and offer so much money for so many thousands or hundreds of thousands of carcasses of beef. I am probably a little bit premature because the advertising is not out, but I can back up these figures. Blade roasts, cut and trimmed, this week will sell for \$1.39 a pound. This is lovely for the consumer. The government realizes there are more consumers than farmers, so they do not give a darn which way it goes. They receive more votes from consumers than from farmers. Blade steak roasts will sell at \$1.39 a pound, short rib roasts at \$1.39, cross