

*Government Orders*

Once they get the prices down, once they get the farmers surrendering, once they get the sense of frustration and hopelessness on a high level, that is when they can move in and buy up those farms at cheap prices. That is when they can begin reorganizing and restructuring the land into a corporate system. All of a sudden, we will have a new system in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I simply put forward to you that that is not the only way it has to be done. There was a time in this country when agriculture was not simply measured by the cost accountant's calculations. One did not bring out the slide rule or the computer, as we witnessed today from the Minister of Transport. We believed that there was a certain sanctity in federal presence and programs providing a stability and underpinning to certain kinds of communities. We believed that one of the reasons for maintaining the concept of a family farm was because it was the keystone of a way of life, a keystone of smaller communities and towns and villages. That is what is disappearing from this country.

Let me talk about a relative of mine who is a school trustee just outside North Battleford. Sitting down over lunch with her just recently and talking about what it is like to be a school trustee in a rural township, the crucial, critical question was: How do you keep a science teacher in high school knowing that you are going to have to increase the mill rate by seven or eight points and farmers cannot pay it? Yet you know that if the science teacher goes, your own kids will not get the same level of education as they would in a town or the city. This is the anguish they go through to make that crucial choice of how to keep one science teacher in a small town. It becomes for them not a statistic. It is not a calculation that you run through Statistics Canada to obtain what makes sense. It is a human problem. It is a real problem. That decision, once made, means a disappearance of a way of life.

It is the same every time the government pulls out of a post office or says: "The train will not stop here any more" and reduces even further the federal presence and activity, a sense that there is a government that is trying at least to give some elementary sense of underpinning to those communities. They are going to give up. They are giving up. They are leaving the farms by the

hundreds of thousands, because they no longer feel that there is any real hope out there.

This legislation that we are debating today is not simply an isolated action, drawn to try to reorganize or rationalize the farm program. It is one of the most sinister and direct attacks upon an important way of life and an important set of communities in this country. We are going to pay an enormous consequence for it.

How much longer this erosion or ravaging of the farm community can continue is hard to say. We do not know where it will stop and how it will continue. What we do know is that if legislation like this bill continues—and we are seeing more and more of it—there will be a further feeling of people being exiled in their own country, being abandoned by their own government and feeling that there is no longer a place for them to call themselves Canadians.

**Mr. Mills:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my hon. colleague who spoke so eloquently and specifically about the situation that is happening to the family farm in Canada. In representing an urban riding there is one thing my colleague touched upon that many people in urban ridings understand, that is the sanctity of life when there is a family living and working on a farm—the caring, the approachability, the passion, and the integrity of these families. Many of us who live in the city are looking for ways to help preserve the family farm.

My question is: What specific advice can you give to the millions of Canadians who care about the family farm? What actions can those of us who live in cities take to make sure the care, attention and support a national government must give to the family farm are activated again?

**Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, it is a good question. It is one that has not been asked often enough by people who live in our urban areas. Too quickly we forget our roots. Most of us have migrated as my family did. My grandparents were farmers in Saskatchewan, one or two generations removed. We forget very quickly when we come to a city that we are not that far away and how much of our own well-being in the country is dependent upon the continued existence of a stable farm food system.