

Soil Erosion

a number of meetings to try and resolve the environment problem, one aspect of which more specifically was soil degradation.

Mr. Speaker, at this point, we must tell ourselves that Canadian society is faced with difficulties such as the loss of prime farmland, the increasing need for industrial land, the protection of wildlife, or again soil erosion. Land erosion affects all provinces. Each year, farm revenue loss from that cause is estimated at more than \$1 billion. As you know, it was believed that land erosion only affected underdeveloped nations. But Canada, as I said in a statement I made in the House, over these last 20 years lost approximately 20 per cent of its farmland, the equivalent of some 1 per cent a year. This in my view is a matter we must look at with much interest, and the motion put forward by the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) in particular seems to tackle the problem. But, Mr. Speaker, this should be taken within the general context rather than simply as one aspect, as the Hon. Member for Davenport seems to be doing.

Water sedimentation and pollution caused by inadequate farming methods increase that problem, involving agriculture, forestry, recreation and wildlife.

The Canadian Government recognizes that the implementation of national goals is based on sound use and management of this nation's land. Mr. Speaker, I was quite impressed by a corporation—I do not quite remember its name—which appeared before the Standing Committee on Agriculture, but in Western Canada, several farmers have formed an organization which favours the use of organic rather than chemical fertilizers and which practices crop rotation. I think that rotating crops is the solution to the soil erosion problem. It is

clear that the farmer who plants potatoes year after year in the same piece of land will experience soil erosion, while if he uses crop rotation, planting potatoes one year, wheat the next, etc., he should experience no soil erosion problem. I feel this is a problem with which all Canadian farmers are faced and I think the Federal Government would be ill advised to tell farmers: Next year, you are going to plant wheat in this soil rather than potatoes or other crops.

I am grateful to the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) who, by raising this issue, provided us with an opportunity to consider again the threat of soil erosion and advise our farmers to take very good care of their soils and use fertilizers with extreme caution.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the time at my disposal has elapsed. I should like to tell my friend, the Hon. Member for Davenport, that I will follow this issue with utmost interest and that he can count on my support when he tries to convince the Government and all interested parties to be very careful, because our agricultural land is one of our greatest wealth and we must do collectively whatever is necessary to protect it.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 36(2) the order is dropped to the bottom of the order of precedence on the Order Paper.

[*Translation*]

It being 3 p.m., the House stands adjourned until Monday at 11 a.m., pursuant to Standing Order 3(1).

The House adjourned at 3.00 p.m.