

*Government Orders*

I am discouraged by the attitude of farmers. I do not blame the farmers for their attitude but it alarms me. I think our government does not understand the crisis that will exist in this country if our farmers continue to fail in their ability to produce and live from their family farms.

I have spoken to many farmers in my riding who speak of the impending closure of their farm operations. I have spoken to farmers whose farm operations have closed down simply because they are no longer able to procure sufficient income to make the high risks that they bear on behalf of the people of Canada worth while.

In my particular riding of Northumberland the farmers who are at risk, the farmers who have had to sell their farms, the farmers who feel that that is imminent for them, are to some extent more fortunate than other farmers in this country.

Northumberland riding is an area of intense growth and development. We have a scarcity of housing. We are experiencing the growth pressures of Toronto where housing costs are enormous. People are looking from large urban areas to the area of Northumberland as a very desirable place to develop. Small businesses are coming in, and we have more and more industrial parks. We have more and more new housing subdivisions. These industrial parks and housing subdivisions are gobbling up number one prime agricultural land.

I cannot accept this. I think that this government has to be more committed to supporting farming in this country.

The revision to these acts, as I said before, is just one more example of how our government is getting rid of agricultural programs that support our farming industry. The farmers that I talk to are discouraged, disheartened and humiliated because of their financial circumstances. In my riding they are able to sell their prime agricultural farm land for housing and industrial development because of the growth experienced in my area.

I know, however, that farmers in other regions of this country who do not happen to reside in areas that are developing like mine also experience the same pressures of being unable to financially continue to maintain their agricultural production. These farmers are having to abandon their farms, their equipment, and walk away

from their farms with nothing. I think this is a disgraceful situation.

I think that this country in this century has grossly underestimated the value of our country's farmers. We do not appreciate the labours of the farmers. It is not a one income operation on our family farms. Every member of the family is still involved, not only in agricultural farming on their own farm, but in order to maintain any level of existence with dignity they are having to be employed in off-farm operations as well.

We do not give credit to our farmers. We do not value in this country the food production we have because we have had it too good. The eastern Europeans and the Europeans are people in my riding who do understand better than others the serious value of food and food production. It is people from Europe who have undergone in this century two serious world wars. These people have experienced hunger and deprivation of basic food. They know that they can no longer even consider their countries to be in a situation of being self-sufficient in agricultural production.

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I personally believe that this is important for every country in the world. I certainly believe it is a situation which should prevail and must prevail in our country. This country must be self-sufficient in food production in our basic food products that are easily grown in our country. If we through revisions to acts such as these which affect our agricultural industry allow farming and agricultural production to fail and allow Americans to take over our food production, then we are in serious trouble.

We know that the United States views our resources as being extremely valuable. Food is a security item. The U.S. would love to have our water, our forests, and our mines, all of our resources. If we do not have the ability to produce our own food and we are dependent on the United States for our food production, then we will find ourselves paying with our natural resources, our water, forests, fish and mining products. We will find that we are paying high prices for food in order to provide our resources to the United States. I do not think that is an enviable position at all. It is one that we must foresee and avoid at all costs.