

## Agriculture by George Elder

### Feudalism—Canadian-style

*The new Land Lease program lets bankrupt farmers pay to farm their own land, while the government cracks down on protest.*

**D**uring the current session of the House of Commons in Canada, a bill was passed enabling the Federal Credit Corporation and banks, including the Royal Bank, to offer farmers a "choice" if they are in arrears on their loans. The farmer can either place his farming operation in a Land Lease Program "voluntarily" or he can face foreclosure. Under Land Lease, the farmer then pays to farm the land he previously owned.

This maneuver is turning Canadian farming into outright feudalism.

The land grab, done in the name of a community land trust, is also being proposed for the United States. There is the Minneapolis-based campaign run by Control Data Corporation's Wellspring outfit, calling for the creation of semi-public land trusts to which young farmers pay tribute. Then there is the Federal Land Corporation idea, proposed by Prof. Neil Harl of Iowa State University, a promoter of plans acceptable to the old money-interests in Europe who are behind the grain and other commodity cartels and insurance companies.

Canada's "voluntary" program has teeth. Those debt-strapped farmers who resist pay a heavy price. Canadian farmers report that banks are using intimidation of farmers' wives and children to force the farmer to comply with the bank's dictates. Banks have surveilled farmers to determine their schedules, and in one instance, when the farmer left his premises, the bank

sent a car to pick up his wife and take her to the bank for "discussions."

In addition, the banks that lend to farmers have created a new function for a bank official or consultant—the "agrologist." The agrologist, on behalf of the bank, offers "advice" to the farmer on what to plant, what seed to use, what fertilizer to use, and how much fertilizer to apply.

What this means in practice, in the words of one farmer, is that "they are turning us into serfs."

Canadian farmers also report that new federal government censorship and investigation procedures are stifling farm-sector opposition to the feudalization of food production. Circulars and publications exposing the nature of the new government farmland policies have been prohibited, under interpretation of laws against promulgation of "hate material." Regulations have been tightened to limit free speech.

Other developments in agriculture in the United States and Canada are setting the stage for food shortages in both countries as well as the rest of the world. On March 27, the U.S. Commerce Department cleared the way for an import duty to be applied to Canadian hogs. The Department found that pork products imported from Canada benefit from a subsidy. "This is a great day—not just for U.S. pork producers, but for everyone who believes in the concept of free and equal trade between nations," said Ron Kahle,

president of the U.S. National Pork Producers' Council.

Under the ruling, any importer of Canadian hogs or pork products will be required to pay an estimated duty or file a bond equal to the value of the subsidy as calculated by the Commerce Department (3.9¢ per pound, or approximately 18% of the declared value).

This will put 15 to 20% of the pork farmers in Canada out of business in the immediate future. In turn, the pork supply will drastically fall.

As for the Canadian "subsidy," Canadian farmers report that it is they who are forced to pay into a price stabilization fund out of their own pockets.

U.S. pork producers have been forced out of operation or into cartelized "contract" or "custom" pork production operations. Record imports of Canadian hogs and Danish pork products have masked this development from the U.S. consumer. Live hog imports from Canada to the United States totaled 740,765 head during January to July 1984, compared with 273,659 the previous year. Now, under the new U.S. tariff duty, one of these days you will find that the bacon won't be there to bring home.

In addition, as a result of Canadian government policy, the Canadian beef industry has almost totally collapsed. The closing of approximately 70% of the livestock marketing yards—due to a lack of livestock to sell—is a disaster for this segment of Canadian agriculture. The official government line is that people are "changing their eating habits" and that therefore beef is no longer in such demand.

The combined result of these events is pushing forward the timetable for starvation in the developing nations, and speeds up the timetable for food shortages and higher prices in the United States and Canada.