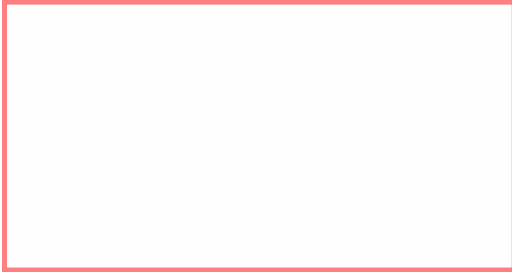


TONY STOECKL,



S U B M I S S I O N

TO THE

BC ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY

REGARDING THE REMOVAL OF AGRICULTURE LAND CLASS TO RESIDENTIAL CLASS.

I read the article in the Northeast News from September 10. 2008 with dismay and disbelief on the above mentioned subject.

Quote: "The B.C. Assessment Authority requires a level of income to be shown from each parcel of land and if that can not be shown, the land can be removed from the farm class and placed in a residential class."

Questions:

"With the removal of a parcel land from agriculture land to residential land, will this automatically be a removal from the ALR to residential land? Would it than be possible to obtain a zoning permit for residential housing? If this is not the case,

this subject must be challenged all the way to the supreme court of Canada to get consistency back and double standard out of this legislation. Who ever is responsible for this policy can not have it both ways, to charge residential tax and **n o t** let residential development take place.

The status of the assessment relates to each parcel and **n o t** to a farm as one entity.

Oil- or pipeline companies are crossing the land. Agriculture use, especially for grain farming does not make economic sense for some time or a farmer undertakes major land improvements like clearing, draining, ditching or filling in low spots or even summer fallow for more than one year. Based on things like that, is the land removed from farm classification? The origin of such undertaking can only be described as law makers or bureaucrats or both are out of control or out of sanity.

Has anyone of our law makers or so called authorities ever heard from the physical law of cause and effect??

Has any of our law makers or bureaucrats ever asked them selves **w h y** so much of our farm land is neglected or not farmed at all, even if it is number one or two soil? Have farmers quit farming because of overwhelming wealth created on the farm or have they quit because they can't afford to put crops in anymore?

For comparison purpose, let's take a look at other industries first.

Does anyone know an oil- or gas well which has a productive reservoir and is shut down? No way. Without regulations, oil companies would extract the maximum flow at all times, because the more as they extract, the more money they make. My 80 year old neighbor Gilbert Loucks mentioned often." We didn't do to bad when a barrel of oil and a bushel of wheat was the same price". A barrel of oil is now about 20 times the price of a bushel of wheat. To make this farming situation to understood by everybody, an other perfect example is this:

No free person would perform employment work when the cost to go to work exceeds the salary obtained or run a business whereby the income did not cover

the expenses. To demand that farmers must earn a certain revenue from farmland or have it reassessed to a higher tax classification is simply coercion on a grand scale especially when the farmer already knows that by farming some land, a loss will occur. **THIS IS EXACTLY THE SITUATION IN WHICH FARMERS ARE IN!** To force the working people to show up for work when no net income can be obtained would be considered as slavery and a major violation of human rights and would be dealt with on the next agenda of the UN General Assembly Meeting in New York.

I urge anyone who has a stake in this matter to read the

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR

AN EXAMPLE FARM IN THE

PEACE RIVER REGION OF B.C.

NOVEMBER 1991

FROM

ZEBEETNOFF CONSULTING

ABBOTSFORD, B.C.

In consultation and cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture in Fort Saint John and a number of local farmers including myself.

The example grain farm had 1280 acres of own- and rented land and an annual **loss** of **\$ 39 929**. Since that time, farm equipment prices doubled, major input costs like fuel and fertilizer tripled while grain prices went up only 50 % in the last couple of years. Under today's farming condition, it is save to say that the loss would reach at least \$ 80 000. The only thing that surprises me is that there are still some farmers left. Let's take a look what effect this had on our farming community:

The average farmer is 60 years old. Most of the farm equipment has reached half the age of the owner / operator. Since my arrival in 1981, we lost in our North Peace area 7 grain elevators out of 9, 5 farm equipment dealers out of 6 which amounts to a nearly total collapse of our infra structure. But worse than that, according to Dr. Linda Haberstock, former president of the Liberal Party of Saskatchewan, the suicide rate of farmers has reached levels of native communities and the divorce rate has matched that of Hollywood.

Now, how are we doing in comparison to two of our main competitors on the world market?

On October 2nd 2008, I called Mr. Karl Danner at my local agriculture office in Germany, the same office in which I taught tax law in Agriculture College before my arrival in Canada.

MY QUESTION:

How much money receives an EU farmer for idling land?

HIS ANSWER:

Up to and including 2008, an EU farmer was forced to idle 10 % of his grain land, subject that his area seeded in grain exceeded 40 acres. As compensation, he received 300 EURO per hectare or about \$ 180 per acre. From 2009 on, every farmer in the EU can without restrictions idle as much or little land as he pleases and receives still the same amount of compensation. Mr. Silbernagel from the ND office of the USDA told me that farmers in the US can remove agriculture land from production and put it in the US conservation program. Most of this land is marginal land to begin with or exposed to erosion etc. In dry years, the farmer is allowed to cut the growth on the land to feed live stock. For his idled land, the farmers receive about \$ 50 per acre.

Agriculture and the development of the nations and societies in the US and the EU is to a large extend comparable with our Canadian homeland. In both entities, farmers are either forced to idle land or have the option to idle land voluntarily. Both governments pay their farmers, albeit for different objectives.

I am convinced that we are the only area in the civilized world in which farmers are too exhausted financially to farm parts of their land (no acreage payment for idled land as mentioned above)) and then are penalized on top of it by high property tax reassessments. It seems that farmers are coerced into farming, just to maintain the farm classification status. Failing to pay the exorbitant residential property tax will ultimately lead to the expropriation of the land from the B.C. government. History has examples where such behavior either led to the demise of the nation or to a revolution! (Soviet Union, French Revolution)

In order to alleviate the previously mentioned hardships to farmers, I therefore submit that the classification status for property tax assessment remains unchanged for all farmland as farm classification, unless there is a second residential dwellings build on a quarter section. In such cases, there should be a relationship of acres taken out from farm classification and transferred to residential classification to the size of the dwelling. In other words, larger dwellings should have more land in residential classification than smaller homes.