

# Local Oxford farm

## family evicted

By Heather Buchanan

Bonne DeBoer and his family watched on March 6 as eight years of their lives came to a sad close with the foreclosure of their farm north of Lakeside.

For DeBoer and his two sons, Steve, 39 and Eric, 30, the last year has been one filled with some relief, but mostly sad memories.

The family's farm operation, once valued at \$1 million in 1982, had shrunk considerably as first the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) moved in on the DeBoer's grain elevators and several other farm properties, and then Municipal Savings and Loan from Barrie presented a notice of eviction on the elder DeBoer's home and 210 acre-property.

While the previous foreclosure by the CIBC on the 3,400-acre (rented land included) cash crop operation was difficult, the family were at least guaranteed personal releases, Bonne said.

"The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce got the farm and we got our personal releases. We lost a lot of money and so did the bank. They were prepared to take the loss and so were we," said Bonne, 66, who has farmed in the area since 1962.

Steve, who at 14 left school to work the farm, said the family had not wanted to draw attention to their plight.

It was after an angry disagreement with trust company officials as the family were removing belongings from the property that sparked the decision to stay on the farm.

"We wanted to do everything the way Municipal Savings and Loan wanted so that we might have an opportunity to negotiate some kind of settlement. But they aren't interested in settling," said Steve.

When the police and trust company officials arrived early on March 6, the two sons and their wives were the only ones at the farm. Eric and his wife, Nancy, 26 refused to leave and had to be physically removed.

Eric was taken away by the OPP and charged with trespassing. His brother Steve and his wife, Monica, 27, went to the end of the driveway when ordered to leave by the police.

Steve said friends and neighbours who had been at the farm offering support the previous day intended to return to provide a united front to police and the company. But the OPP arrived early at 7:30 a.m.

He said on Monday, March 2, that there's still a possibility an agreement might be reached. The DeBoers had offered the company \$275,000 for the property.

Steve said \$330,000 was owing on the farm in spring 1986 when they missed their payment. The reason was the foreclosure by the CIBC. The trust company is now claiming the amount is \$403,000.

At the time the Canadian Imperial of Commerce refused to continue the farm's large operating loan, the DeBoers were solvent with no outstanding bills with creditors.

"In 1985, before depreciation, we made a little over \$200,000, but the bank panicked because of the operation's size," said Bonne. "It was the situation in the United States and Europe that caused them to decide to close us down."

### 'Immorally wrong'

Shortly before noon, after consultation with family and friends, Bonne thanked a group of supporting local farmers standing at the end of

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