



Farmer's protest is plowed under by tractor theft

For the past four days, an Ontario farmer has been driving his tractor around the streets of Toronto to draw public attention to the plight of farmers who have lost their property to bank foreclosures.

But George Bothwell's 1970 tractor was stolen from a downtown parking lot on Wednesday night, forcing him to put his protest activities aside for a while.

"It's things like this that kill the spirit of Canadians who are trying to fight back," said the 38-year-old farmer from Grey County.

The tractor, valued at \$10,000, was decorated with signs denouncing the banks.

In 1982, the Bank of Montreal foreclosed on Mr. Bothwell's loans. He lost control of his family farm and has been forced to rent

land to make a living. "I was born and raised on that century-old farm, which had been carved out of the wilderness by my grandfather."

The loss of the family farm has turned Mr. Bothwell into a bank-hater and he seems to have met other people who share his opinions.

On his trip to Toronto, Mr. Bothwell was accompanied by a Bobcaygeon, Ont., lawyer, John Gorman, who has represented many farmers and small businessmen in legal battles against the banks.

"We call our trip to Toronto the Journey of Justice," Mr. Gorman said.

Despite the unexpected detour in the journey — as they search for the stolen tractor — Mr. Bothwell said he intends to keep up his fight.

"I call the tractor 'The Ghost of Agriculture Past,' and I assure you its spirit will rise again."

Metro Toronto Police are investigating the theft.