

*Pioneer Trust*

prevent a waste of government money just had two hundred million some odd dollars go "oops" through their fingers.

**Mr. Crosbie:** So vote against it. You're against the Bill, are you? Why don't you vote against it?

**Mr. de Jong:** I hear the Hon. Member across the way bellowing as usual, Mr. Speaker. Does he not realize that under a New Democratic Government in the Province of Saskatchewan, we never had a cent of deficit? But the Tory Government in the Province of Saskatchewan in less than three years has accumulated a deficit of over \$1 billion. So much, Mr. Speaker, for those responsible, businesslike people. And when one considers the fiasco of Pioneer Trust, we begin to realize why we have over a \$1 billion deficit in the Province of Saskatchewan. The truth is, Mr. Speaker, that these men and women who parade themselves as being astute business people who know how to run the shop, in fact do not know how to run the shop. They gave a \$30 million guarantee to a trust company without having looked at its books. That is being irresponsible to the taxpayers of the Province of Saskatchewan.

I have asked the Minister time and time again if she ever got in touch with the Province of Saskatchewan directly about the guarantee which it made to Pioneer Trust. I asked if she ever got assurances from the province directly. I have been met with silence, Mr. Speaker. If one goes through the court documents which were submitted in Saskatchewan under the Winding-up Act, one sees a total silence concerning the communications between the federal Government and the Province of Saskatchewan.

Perhaps during the committee stage we will get a little more information about this, but I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that they did not even talk to each other, that they did not even communicate with each other until it was too late and it was all over. I suspect that the federal Government, when it renewed Pioneer's licence in December, took Pioneer's management's word, the letter it waved from the Treasurer of the Province of Saskatchewan giving the guarantee, and never went back to the Minister himself and asked: "Do you really make this guarantee? Can we have it in writing before we renew Pioneer's licence?" I suspect that never occurred. I suspect there was never any of that type of communication.

So we find that not only were the federal Government and the provincial Government not very astute in their business dealings—which has now resulted in a cost to the taxpayers of this country of some \$200 million—but they did not even communicate. And that is a party which claims it is going all out on communication and consultation. Perhaps Hon. Members opposite feel "What's another \$200 million?"

I do have great difficulty in supporting this Bill.

**Mr. Crosbie:** Well, don't. Vote against it.

**Mr. de Jong:** I will support it because it was not the fault of the depositors that they lost. It is not their fault. But there is something inside of me which says that something is not right

here. This Government has cut some \$200 million out of unemployment insurance, restricting the benefits a little more, so that unemployed people will find their benefits from unemployment insurance a little more restricted. These are people who are living on a few hundred dollars a week and are desperately trying to make ends meet. The Government is all gung ho to cut down on these programs, this government fat, so to speak, to put the screws to ordinary working men and women, the retired, the disabled and the poor, but at the same time it can throw out \$200 million here and so many hundred million dollars there for another trust company or another firm. And it all gets passed in a day, as smooth and easy as grease passing through a goose. There is something not right. Something inside of me says: "Hey, what's going on here?" What sort of world are we living in when the incomes and well-being of the poor people and the unemployed are always up for grabs, always being debated and always being sniped at? Something is just not right.

I hope that the Committee of the Whole will be able to ask the Minister and her officials some direct questions. I hope we will be able to get some straight and honest answers. I think it is in the interests of the Minister herself, as well as in the interests of the people of Canada, to give some straight answers so that she can attempt to restore the public trust in these institutions and bring about a new regime in this field. We want to feel that she knows what she is doing and is being honest with us. We will judge by the type of answers she will give us this afternoon whether we are to have confidence in her and in the changes she will attempt to bring about. I understand that some time later this year there will be legislative changes dealing with financial institutions. So I hope we will get some straight answers from the Minister and her officials, that the Bill before us will be the last of its type, and that in the future we will see our financial institutions better managed, better policed and more sturdy. Hopefully we will hear some intelligent comments this afternoon from the Minister of Justice (Mr. Crosbie), because I am sure he will have a lot to say.

● (1200)

**Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry-Prescott-Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate this morning. I say that recognizing that all of us would rather not ever discuss such issues in that they would never happen; but it seems that ever since I was first elected at the provincial level in 1981 we have not had any more than a couple of weeks go by without having to discuss the failure of a financial institution. I remember that in the 1981 Ontario provincial campaign one of the major issues was the fall of Astra Trust and ReMor, two affiliated financial institutions in Ontario. At that time, the provincial Government told us that never again in this country would we hear about financial institutions collapsing in such a way. Of course, we all know better now. We all know that, unfortunately, financial institutions have had their share of trouble over the past few years. The most famous or infamous of these failures is that involving Crown Trust, Seaway Trust and Greymac Trust in Ontario. We all recall