

plan which will help every individual farmer in years when grain income is down, and it will have a great stabilizing effect on our small rural communities and on the industries that serve grain farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Continue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member may continue if there is unanimous consent. Is there such consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Douglas (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, shortly before the six o'clock recess I yielded to the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Rose). I am glad I did so, not only because it gave him an opportunity to go home and nurse his cold but because it gives me an opportunity to reply to something he said. He referred to the old Socialist doctrine that is being revived again by a prominent group in the NDP, which maintains that the state should own all the land and that farmers should be only tenants. Let me tell you that farmers did not settle on the Prairies to become sharecroppers for the state. The old CCF party in Saskatchewan spent many years in the wilderness and it was not until they disowned the doctrine of state ownership of the land that they managed to gain power. This resurgence of the radical left wing Socialists who stridently advocate state ownership of almost everything, including farm land, is all that is needed to ensure the demise of the NDP in rural Canada.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, based on the enthusiastic reception accorded the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the cabinet in Saskatchewan on February 12 and 13, that the Liberal party is well on the way to regaining its rightful position as the dominant party in rural Canada. I am confident that the majority of Canadians support the government in its efforts to be fair to people in all parts of this great nation, which will remain united under the progressive and flexible leadership of our outstanding Prime Minister. Therefore, I cannot support this motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath).

Mr. Benjamin: On a point of order, may I ask Your Honour if there is not a rule of the House of which the hon. member who just finished needs to be reminded? This is the sixth or seventh occasion on which he has treated us to a recitation read at violent speed, and I think there is a rule of the House which prohibits the reading of speeches.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member has referred to a practice of the House, and it seems to the Chair that sometimes it is honoured in the breach. In any event, at this point the hon. member has concluded his remarks and so I will recognize the hon. member for St. John's East.

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I regret that this motion will not come to a vote. It will not

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come to a vote because of what I consider to be one of the major inadequacies of the new rules of the House, and I hope that those rules will be reviewed before this House becomes nothing but a mere rubber-stamp for the government. And, Mr. Speaker, there is a great danger of that, especially as you look around this empty chamber tonight at a time when this country is in the midst of the highest unemployment it has experienced in many years.

Mr. Gray: What about the empty opposition benches?

Mr. McGrath: I make no distinction. I refer to empty benches all over the House. But the government has special responsibility and it is not discharging that responsibility. Its members should at least come into the House and listen to the legitimate representations of the members of the House who are daily subjected to the cries and the appeals of the unemployed and the disadvantaged. The hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Douglas) can relax. He will not have to wrestle with his conscience because he will not have to vote for or against the motion.

In examining the serious, critical problem of unemployment, particularly as it relates to the disadvantaged people of this country, we must examine it in the context of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) and the charge placed upon him by Parliament when at the beginning of this Parliament it enacted legislation setting up his new department. Parliament gave him special powers to create new jobs. He was given broad and sweeping powers and it was generally conceded that they were needed if he was to succeed in bringing regional disparity and its consequences to an end. But today we find ourselves in the midst of critically high unemployment, once again examining the functions of the minister and his department to see if they have been discharged properly. There is very little we can go on.

Certainly we cannot get much enlightenment from the minister's speeches. When the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion does make a non-partisan speech outside Quebec—and that is very rare—he very rarely says anything worth while. Last Friday during the government's crusade to western Canada the minister made one of his rare non-partisan speeches. I found it difficult to read anything into what he said because in actual fact he said nothing. He said nothing to enlighten us on how he is living up to his responsibilities in this period of critical unemployment. The only thing I could find in his speech worthy of quoting was the following, and I quote from his speech on February 12 at Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan:

While we are working largely with economic tools, our basic concern is with improving the lot of people. In the last analysis, our success or failure will be measured by the extent to which we have helped the disadvantaged gain fuller access to the benefits of our Canadian society.

● (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, that is a very noble objective. It is an objective with which nobody can quarrel. It is an objective with which everybody will agree. Certainly every