

of Saskatchewan, particularly farmers, continue to be very confused about the Government's so-called \$1 billion farm aid program. Is the Minister prepared to announce whether any decisions have been made concerning the form of assistance and its allocation? If he is not prepared to do so today, when will he be prepared to make some announcements?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, there is only one reason the people of western Canada and indeed the grain farmers of Canada are somewhat confused, that is, the continuing effort on the other side of the House to distort and to add confusion. There is no question about that at all.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wise:** We indicated in the House—the Prime Minister and I have responded to questions—that the Government is determined to put \$1 billion into the hands of Canadian farmers.

**Mr. Keeper:** When?

**Mr. de Jong:** Mr. Speaker, I am afraid that answer will not satisfy Saskatchewan farmers. They want some answers now because they need those answers now.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO SASKATCHEWAN PREMIER

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, on Friday the Premier of Saskatchewan announced to the people of that province that some \$450 million would be going to Saskatchewan farmers. The next day Deputy Ministers from Ontario, Manitoba, and Alberta denied it. Could the Minister tell us today whether the Premier is confusing the voters and farmers of Saskatchewan, or is it that he or anyone else, including the Government, does not know what the \$1 billion farm aid program is all about?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, last Thursday we met with the Deputy Ministers. This Thursday we will meet with farm leaders. At that time we will have the benefit of the advice and suggestions of the Deputy Ministers and indeed of farm leaders. I indicated last week that if it takes a week or two weeks for us to make it fair and equitable, that if we have to take a little longer to do it right, we are going to take that time.

#### SITUATION OF FARMERS

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture as well. He talked about confusion. Obviously the confusion is between the Premier of Saskatchewan and the Minister of Agriculture across the way. On Friday the Premier of Saskatchewan announced clearly that a \$457 million cash deficiency payment would be provided. At the same time the Minister's office here was saying that no decision had been reached—

#### Oral Questions

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Would the Hon. Member put his question, please?

**Mr. Foster:** Who are the farmers supposed to believe—a desperate Premier in Saskatchewan who is trying to get re-elected, or a Minister of Agriculture who is trying to provide a deficiency payment with no money?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I had some difficulty following the logic and the reasoning in the Hon. Member's question. The fact is that farmers with whom I spoke across the country are not confused. They recognize that the Government was with them from the day it was sworn in. We have been with them consistently each and every day, with some 317 initiatives delivering well over \$5.6 billion. Indeed, over and above that, there will be a new program of \$1 billion—

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

#### GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma):** Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the same Minister. Is it the Government's plan to negotiate cynically through the Saskatchewan election by leading people to believe that there will be a cash deficiency payment and, after the election is over, to announce that it is only a loan guarantee, loans which have to be repaid by farmers who are already over their heads in debt? Is that the plan of the Minister?

**Hon. John Wise (Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, the only thing I can say to the Hon. Member is: Just watch us.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Wise:** Just watch us.

**Some Hon. Members:** We are!

**Mr. Wise:** I invite the Hon. Member to check the record. When we make commitments, we deliver on those commitments, and we are going to deliver on this one.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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#### SOCIAL AFFAIRS

##### LOW INCOME FAMILIES

**Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare indicated that he does not care about poverty and will leave it to the private sector to create jobs. Does the Minister of Finance agree with