

thousands of these farm families across the Prairies that are on the verge of bankruptcy. These farm families have supported the Tories election after election. These farmers felt that the former Liberal Governments had totally betrayed them and ignored them, and they had. However, lo and behold, this bunch today is exactly the same as the Liberals were before. The farmers have become pawns in the political games the Governments are playing.

The Government did not have any trouble bailing out the banks. Over one weekend a group of bankers came together, stated their problem and got an easy solution. Over the weekend a quick decision led to more than \$1 billion in federal moneys going to bail out the banks. A handful of individuals and a handful of institutions were bailed out with no problem at all. However, thousands of farm families are being twisted and turned around by the Government and its colleagues in Regina.

So much for the promise of deficiency payments and this \$1 billion which we are trying to get a fix on. Is it new money? Where is it going to come from? Is it going to be for farmers across Canada or just for the few western provinces? We are trying desperately to get some details so the folks back home will know what is coming in order that they can start planning the future. We are getting all these evasive answers. We are told that it will require more studies and more meetings. For heaven's sake, Mr. Speaker, there have been meetings after meetings after meetings until they are coming out of their ears.

Western farmers need, want, and demand some answers, not more meetings, not more poppycock, not more committees, proposals, suggestions or studies. They want action, Mr. Speaker. The three western pools have called for a minimum of \$2 billion if the viability of western Canadian agriculture is going to be restored.

I do not think the Government has the backbone to make that commitment to those farm families. It is willing to make commitments to the banks. It is willing to make commitments to the corporate sector in the country. It is willing to give the corporate sector all sorts of tax write-offs and easy loopholes. It is willing to lose billions of dollars in tax breaks. Two regressive tax measures, the \$500,000 lifetime capital gains tax exemption and the significantly increased before-tax contributions allowed for the registered retirement pension plans are estimated to shift about \$2 billion in tax burdens away from the well-off and onto the federal deficit. The Government is quite willing to do that, Mr. Speaker. It was a snap decision. To help the thousands of farm families that are desperate back home more studies and more meetings are required. The farm families have become pawns in the political games that the folks opposite are playing.

What more can we expect from Tory Governments? I will tell you a few things about the Tory Government back home in Saskatchewan. They were respectful businessmen. They were going to set things straight. They were going to bring business acumen to the Saskatchewan economy. They said that if they were elected they would bring all sorts of new developments to

Saskatchewan and get Saskatchewan going. They certainly got Saskatchewan going, Mr. Speaker—downhill.

Mr. Benjamin: Down the drain.

Mr. de Jong: In fact, in today's *Globe and Mail* we see that Saskatchewan is losing people at the fastest rate in this country with the exception of another great Tory bastion, British Columbia. It is losing more people because of a faltering economy. That Tory Government came in when there was over \$1.5 billion in surpluses which the people of Saskatchewan had put away for a rainy day. That province had consistently run surpluses in its budget year after year as a result of prudent management of the public revenues and resources. Now, after four and some years of Tory rule, it has a deficit of over \$2.5 billion. They are the folks who always talk about deficit and fiscal responsibility. What they have done to the Treasury in Saskatchewan is shameful. Even the Liberals, during the Thatcher years, were not as brazen in how they dispensed the public purse and mismanaged the economy.

• (1730)

The Tories ruined the economy of that province to the point that we are in debt to the tune of \$2.5 billion. Those Members think it is funny. Listen to them laugh, Mr. Speaker. It is a great joke to them, but it is a debt that the kids in Saskatchewan will have to pay for several generations to come as a result of the stupidity and mismanagement by the Tories in Saskatchewan. They are the Tories who knew all about business and knew how to run a provincial Government.

I suggest that it is hard to run a provincial Government seriously if one does not first believe in government. Under the Blakeney and Tommy Douglas Governments in Saskatchewan there was a group of people who believed that running a government required responsibility and professionalism. We went out and hired professionals, and the Saskatchewan civil service was one of the best in this country. It was difficult to attract professional people to a place like Saskatchewan, which was a small rural province that did not have a large population. Certainly, there was not much excitement and action there, unless one created a challenge. We created a challenge and acquired some of the best civil servants anywhere in North America.

The Tories do not believe in government and think that a second-hand car dealer can run the show. They came in and destroyed that civil service.

Mr. Blenkarn: Who is a second-hand car dealer?

Mr. de Jong: When the Tories went after the public service in Saskatchewan, it was one of the saddest moments in Saskatchewan's political history. When they fired all those people, not only did they go on a witch-hunt that affected Deputy Ministers and heads of Departments, they went down to the level of clerks.