

*The Address—Mr. de Jong*

**Mr. Witer:** If the Hon. Member had been listening she would have heard me clearly state that the Government has created a positive economic environment in order for those free market forces to work. I attribute that positive attitude, and the desire of the private sector to invest, to the confidence which they place in this Government.

**Ms. Copps:** Mr. Speaker, I understand the Hon. Member has a pressing interest in agricultural matters since he referred to them in his speech. I wonder if he could tell us whether he supports supply management in agriculture.

**Mr. Malone:** No, he does not.

**Mr. Witer:** A simple no will suffice.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** Are there any further questions? Questions and comments are now terminated.

**Mr. Simon de Jong (Regina East):** Mr. Speaker, it is of particular interest to me to participate again in a debate on the Speech from the Throne. As you and all Members in this House are aware, the Speech from the Throne is an opportunity for the Government to lay out to this House and the Canadian people its intentions and its broad vision of the future of this country. It is an opportunity for the Government to explain to the House and the Canadian people what it intends to do in a general sense in the upcoming session. I think all Canadians were somewhat disappointed with this document. I do not think we expected detailed programs to be enunciated in the Speech from the Throne, but I think we did expect a new direction, a new vision to be enunciated in the document.

Certainly the politically wise, meaning the newspaper columnists and people who follow politics actively, speculated that the Speech from the Throne would offer the Government a new opportunity to set forth new directions. It was noted that the Government's popularity in the polls has been declining on a steady basis and that it would use this opportunity to attempt to rally the troops and present a new vision. We did not get much of a vision at all. It was as though a pair of glasses had been put on by the Government and they were full of mist, grease and grime, and some very muddled notions were presented in the speech.

Let us first deal with the question of agriculture. I think commentators in the media have done special pieces outlining the deep crisis which exists in Canadian agriculture today. Various studies have confirmed this. A special committee of this House dealing with agriculture has held extensive hearings as well. We have known for some time that the U.S. Farm Bill would have dramatic effects on the price of grains on the world markets. That is nothing new, Mr. Speaker, the warning has been issued for some time. Thousands of Canadian farm families stand on the brink of bankruptcy. One of the backbones of this nation is in danger. You would have expected that the Party which has enjoyed long support from western Canada and western farmers would have come to the aid of the

farmers in western Canada. You would have expected the Speech from the Throne to have laid out in no uncertain terms that the Government would not allow western Canadian agriculture to slide into bankruptcy.

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After all, the Premier of our province, Mr. Grant Devine, a Conservative, assured the voters in Saskatchewan time and again that he has an agreement with the feds. He was telling us to wait till the Speech from the Throne. In fact, Mr. Devine took an afternoon off from his campaigning to sit in front of the television set to hear of all the goodies the federal Government was going to supply to the western farmers. What a disappointed Mr. Devine we had that day!

According to the *Star Phoenix* Mr. Devine got on the phone to official cabinet Ministers in Ottawa. He was overheard by a reporter to say over the phone that heads will roll unless the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) delivers on his promises. It was obvious that Mr. Devine was indeed disappointed and that the Speech from the Throne did not deliver on the promises that were made.

**Mr. Benjamin:** Would you believe desperate?

**Mr. de Jong:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, indeed Mr. Devine was desperate. You will remember that earlier this year Mr. Devine said that \$5 billion was needed to ensure that western Canadian agriculture would remain viable. After some meetings of the Premier it is now down to "at least a billion, we need at least a billion right now". The Speech from the Throne did not make that quite clear. The Tories, who are polling every day, sent a message back the day after the Speech from the Throne saying that they were going to be wiped out in Saskatchewan unless something more substantial was said. On Friday afternoon we heard the Prime Minister make a vague reference to some aid package of up to \$1 billion. He did not quite spell it out for us.

If the Government had been really sincere in its commitment it would have thought out this proposal. At least we are talking about big bucks, over \$1 billion. The Prime Minister would have had something substantial to announce. He would have had some details. After all, the farmers in my constituency are existing with a tremendous amount of insecurity about their future. They do not need federal politicians to jerk them around. They want some definite answers. Their livelihood is at stake. They do not want to be pawns in some political game that the Tories are playing between Ottawa and Regina. It is serious, Mr. Speaker, it is their livelihood. It is not something to smirk about or to jerk them around with as the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski) did when he said, "Well, anything to win an election", grin, grin. And then afterwards he said, "Oh, no, I didn't mean it. I'm sorry, we're really sincere". We do not need the grins that we are seeing on the government benches today. It is serious. There are young farm families on the verge of bankruptcy and unless there is a real commitment by the Government they will go under. There are