

*Government Orders*

federal government will come up with \$500 million, provinces should come up with \$500 million for a total package of \$1 billion.

That sounds all right, does it not? Except the provinces are strapped; they are absolutely strapped. They cannot accede to this; they have not got the cash. The strange part is that the federal government has the money. Yet, for some unknown reason, whether it is intransigence or stubbornness, the government will not release the money. The government has been beseeched, begged and implored to release the money without strings attached. It will not do it.

The Minister of Agriculture has said over and over again: "It is time for the provinces to stop playing politics and to get serious". It is time for the federal government to get serious about this matter because farmers are in a desperate situation. They need the money now. If you cannot get the seed in the ground, you can hardly harvest in August and September.

**Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina—Lumsden):** Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with what my hon. friend said about the farmers. We used to say that to the Liberals many years ago.

However, after listening and watching him I did take exception when he said something about the Canada Pension Plan going bankrupt. That is the line the insurance companies peddled since 1966 and every year since.

Every year they increase contributions by all Canadians to the Canada Pension Plan which keeps it actuarially sound. It provides a pool of capital for the provinces and the federal government to borrow from on which they pay interest. In fact it is the interest the provinces pay that keeps the damn thing actuarially sound.

Could the hon. gentleman provide us with any kind of statistical and actuarial evidence? In my opinion, the Canada Pension Plan is one of the best deals an employee can get. Can he provide any evidence about the doomsday scenario we have had since 1966 when it first came in? I have made my full contribution every year, and so has my employer—and there were several of them. The predictions in 1960 were that by the year 1990, and now it has somehow or other changed to the year 2000, it would be bankrupt. Where the hell does he get this? Why does he keep undermining and peddling the

line of the insurance industry which would like to have that business?

**Ms. Mitchell:** Right on.

**Mr. Harvard:** Mr. Speaker, I will try to keep my remarks short because I know we are running out of time.

First of all I would like to say to my good friend from the Regina area that I am not attacking the Canada Pension Plan in principle. I am a supporter of the Canada Pension Plan. It is not only New Democrats and socialists with their high moral values who support something like a pension plan. I happen to support it as well, strongly, and I can tell you that I do not want to see the Canada Pension Plan die. I do not want to see the Canada Pension Plan go bankrupt.

But, by golly, I am not going to bury my head in the sand like my good friend from Regina who just wants to sit there and believe that it is a good idea and that it will somehow swim on its own. It really does not matter what you contribute to it or what kind of enhancement benefits there are. It does not matter how many workers there are, or how many retirees there are. It is just simply a good idea, and if it is a good idea it will work. Typical NDP thinking.

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in the House of Commons to debate Bill C-65, but more important I will take this opportunity to bring Canadians up to date and, more specifically, the 200,000 people who reside in the riding of York North up to date with the government's economic record.

I will illustrate how it has managed, or should I say mismanaged, the finances of this nation. Everywhere I go in the federal riding of York North I meet people—at barber shops, local grocery stores, supermarkets, community centres, and senior citizen homes. During my school speaking tour I spoke to close to 7,000 students in elementary and high schools.

• (1630)

People of all ages are very disappointed in the performance of this government, and rightly so. Under the leadership of the Conservative government the public debt has doubled in five years from \$170 billion to \$351 billion. The government failed to reduce the public debt at a time when national and international economic growth was at its peak. In five years this government has