

*Government Orders*

We also know that the federal government promised farmers who were not interested in joining the most recent farm income programs, GRIP and NISA, that they would be excluded from other programs if they did not join. Farmers were promised the third line of defence by the federal government so they joined the GRIP and NISA programs. And now when they need it the most there is no third line of defence payment. This is truly unfair.

We in Saskatchewan know that we have 40 per cent of the farms and 4 per cent of the population. We cannot solve the agricultural crisis on our own. We can no longer accept any more federal government offloading of its debt or its responsibilities on to the backs of the provincial government and the producers of the province.

The Minister of Finance was recently Minister of Agriculture. He knows the seriousness of the crisis on the prairies. Therefore, if he will not act today, we can only assume that he does not want to act. He does not need to be told how a loss of another 10,000 farmers from the land in western Canada will affect our communities and our economy.

He knows investment in the industry during its most troubling, most distressing times can be a life saver. He knows the value of agriculture to the health of the entire country. Frankly I am disturbed he did not take this opportunity to secure the future of this essential industry in the past two days.

Obviously the challenge of the next federal government will be to get this country working again and that includes establishing a viable and productive farm sector. I am looking forward to the upcoming federal election when all Canadians can debate the national economy and individual Canadians like those in the farm communities that I represent and others across the west can hold this government accountable for its lack of action on these and other issues.

There is an alternative economic vision in this country and New Democrats are proud that our alternative strategy includes a long-term plan for agricultural producers and Canadians in rural communities everywhere. Things have to change in Canada, and if this government will not change them then Canadians have no choice but to change the government.

**Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina):** Madam Speaker, I am happy for a chance to speak on Bill C-98, authority to borrow money, because this financial statement, this mini budget by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, is the clearest example of wrong-headedness that I have seen in my 11 years in Parliament.

For eight years this government has been talking about making Canada prosperous by raising taxes on the majority of Canadians, people employed by others, people self-employed or the jobless. It is giving the surplus in tax breaks to employers and owners of capital.

What are the results? In eight years this government has taken Canada to 1.5 million jobless. That is not counting the ones that it does not count. We know there is at least a million more, probably a million and a half more, who are either discouraged from working or working much too short a time to make a living because there is nothing else for them to do. But on the official figures, this government has just taken us back to where we were 10 or 11 years ago.

The only difference is that most of the factories where several hundred thousand jobs have been lost are closed and the machinery has been sold and nobody is going back there to work, ever.

This government has also doubled or more than doubled the federal government's national debt. It may satisfy some that there are wealthy Tory supporters who grow richer as owners of a good part of that debt, but they are making most Canadians poorer and this government pretends to care about most Canadians.

Let us look at the finance minister's statement. In table 1, the expenditure reduction, the first to be cut is the people at the bottom of the ladder, the jobless. Instead of 60 per cent of their UI benefits, they will get 57 per cent and the government will save \$1.5 billion on that in two and a quarter years.

Then there are the quits or the fired. They can argue as to whether they had reason to quit or whether the employer had reason to fire them, but they have to argue without anything to eat. It is going to be hard. The government will save almost \$2.5 billion on those during these two and a quarter years.

Then there will be cuts in science and technology. Those are mostly salaries.