

The Budget—Mr. A. W. Stuart

Now he stands on the floor of this house and tells us that the premier of Ontario is responsible for New Brunswick not being able to participate. The general public knows that suggestions such as these are incorrect. Every member of this house knows they are incorrect. The Right Hon. C. D. Howe made that announcement on two different occasions that I know of in the House of Commons. I often think that criticism, if it is based on something constructive and well founded, is good in any government, provincial or federal; but statements which are made so recklessly and without foundation may create interest in the home constituency at that particular time, but I am sure they are of little advantage in the long run.

I have been asked by the hon. member for Saint John-Albert to express my views on Beechwood. That is the power development on which we are depending now, to be built in New Brunswick. I want to say at the outset that I have never said anything at any time in any place that would be considered to be harmful in any way to Beechwood. But I want to suggest here today, and every person in New Brunswick is going to know exactly where I stand, that I am one who believes that Beechwood is not economically sound.

Mr. Bell: That is what I wanted to know.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): You could have asked me that. You did not have to challenge me on the floor of the house. That information was at your disposal at any time you wanted it. I have never hesitated to express my views at any time. I believe it is a great mistake to go ahead with Beechwood, and I say that for this reason. We have not gone into the study of power from atomic energy. I might also say that when comparisons are made between costs of hydro power and the cost of atomic energy, the power sites in Ontario and Quebec are always used as comparisons. It is not fair to compare them with New Brunswick, because the cost of hydro-electric energy in New Brunswick is far above that in Quebec and Ontario. The differential is quite different when you compare hydro developments in New Brunswick with those in Ontario and Quebec. I have also been informed that our provincial government has been offered cheap power from the province of Quebec on a long-term basis. I have been informed it is much cheaper than we could develop it ourselves. If that is true, I think it should be investigated very thoroughly.

I would not want the hon. member for Saint John-Albert to be leaving the impression that all the citizens of New Brunswick are in favour of Beechwood. I should like to

[Mr. Stuart (Charlotte).]

assure him they are not. When they are given the facts that the building of Beechwood will never decrease the cost of electrical energy by one cent but will increase our provincial debt by over 50 per cent, they are going to take a second glance at it before they endorse it. I feel it is a matter that must be gone into much more carefully than it has been so far. I believe that there are other sources of power that can be developed which will bring about a much better result than we can ever hope to have from Beechwood. I believe the hon. member will understand exactly my feelings about this project. Again I want to emphasize the fact that never at any time have I said anything detrimental to this project, but those are my personal opinions—

Mr. Bell: Until now.

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): Until now. Those are my personal opinions and I am not in the least hesitant about placing them on the record.

Mr. Bell: May I ask a question if you are going to leave Beechwood now?

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): Yes.

Mr. Bell: Does the hon. member think the provincial debt will be increased greatly if the federal government assists us with low interest money?

Mr. Stuart (Charlotte): I am not in a position to discuss low interest money from the federal government. I am not the minister of finance. Low interest loans to a provincial government for the development of hydro are a matter that I know nothing whatever about. It may have been done, but I know nothing about it.

Now I shall mention one other fact. The hon. member for Saint John-Albert has challenged me to express my views. Now I am going to make a statement, and I shall get some reaction from him. During the unemployment debate in this chamber nearly every Conservative member took part in that debate. It was most noticeable that the member for Saint John-Albert held his seat. There was never a word from him. It was rumoured all through the corridors of this building that the hon. member for Saint John-Albert, knowing the conditions this year in his constituency were much better than last, wanted to get up on the floor of the house and express that opinion, perhaps taking it for granted that he would secure some credit for that improved position; but it was suggested that if he did it would be contrary to the arguments that would be put forward by his gloom casting comrades.

An hon. Member: Don't be silly now.