

Interim Supply

Mr. Rowe: Worth about four cents a day. If it were not for the opposition before an election the people of Canada would be the forgotten element as far as this government is concerned. Never since confederation has a government grown so smug, so complacent, so indolent and so careless, so self-satisfied and so sure that it was right as has this government. Their front benchers act like tired old men; their back benchers act like young, smug, happy hecklers afraid to say something in case it might be wrong, and usually interrupting for their own amusement.

Mr. Habel: We are not used to acting like clowns.

Mr. Rowe: You have been very good at it. In fact, I can distinguish the hon. member by the nice, mild, ineffective tenor of his interruptions from time to time. He rarely rises to his feet, but certainly when he is on his seat he interrupts most eloquently.

The veterans of this country are not satisfied; the old age pensioners are not satisfied; the mothers with their babies are not satisfied—

An hon. Member: And you are not satisfied.

Mr. Rowe: No, I am not satisfied. I have not been satisfied with you for a quarter of a century, and the people of Canada are not satisfied with you either. The blind of this country are not satisfied; the farmers of Canada are not satisfied. The government is asking us to vote interim supply. We do not propose to hold it up. I am not going to try to delay it, because the Minister of Finance has imposed tight money on everybody else and we, even at this late date before the election, are not going to withhold loose money from him.

I have watched quite a few ministers of finance during my time here. I think the present Minister of Finance and I know each other well. We don't live far apart, and I have great respect for him. I have watched finance ministers in parliament since the days of J. A. Robb but I have never known one in all that time who told everybody else what to do with their money yet handled our money so loosely. No other cabinet minister ever took so much from the people. No other Minister of Finance ever collected as much revenue from the people of Canada as the present Minister of Finance; no other minister told the people not to spend money in order that they might be able to pay these exorbitant taxes. Did any other cabinet minister since confederation ever spend so much money? Knowing something of his family background, I have always been amazed that a man with a steady Scots type of background

would ever become such a reckless spend-thrift as he has been since he came to office.

I can understand why the people of this country are getting disturbed. You hear it on the sidewalks; you hear it in the town councils; you hear it in the garages; you hear it in county councils; you hear it in every place and gathering which these cabinet ministers do not have time to attend. They are saying: "It is time for a change." You can hear them saying it in the barbershops. The Minister of Finance himself must have heard it—he looks pretty trim, and must have been in one lately. You will hear them on June 10 saying: "It is time for a change."

We are not giving undue credit to anyone, but you will hear them steadily say: "This fellow Diefenbaker will be the next Prime Minister of Canada." The reason for that is, not that he pretends to be a superman but the people of Canada are tired; the people of Canada are disgusted; the people of Canada are dissatisfied—dissatisfied and worried because some of the fundamentals that concern the lives of the people of this country in the future are not being given any consideration. I could not help feeling amazed when the Minister of Finance presented his budget. Some people have said that the Minister of Finance has no sense of humour. But he has. You will have noticed that when he was presenting the budget he even laughed at himself when he presented that four cents a day bonus for the babies,—

Mr. Harris: Oh, no.

Mr. Rowe: —and 20 cents a day for the old people. Somebody said, "What about June 10?" and he laughed heartily and the people of Canada laughed.

Mr. Harris: I think this is quite unfair. I laughed when you applauded my withdrawal of the soft drink tax. That was the only time I laughed.

Mr. Rowe: Why did you laugh when you withdrew the soft drink tax? I do not drink soft drinks myself.

Mr. Harris: I think that is unfair. That statement has already been made by another speaker in the opposition party and I thought I ought to put the record straight.

An hon. Member: You laughed; you laughed at yourself.

Mr. Harris: Certainly I laughed. I laughed at the time when I said I had considered the soft drink industry. At that point applause broke out on all sides of the house and from other parties. I laughed at that point because I knew they approved what I was going to do.

Mr. Rowe: I would not want to be unfair to the minister.