

*Dollar Items*

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** There are other very important issues facing this nation. There is the issue of energy—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I invite hon. members to pay attention so that the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) can make the point which he wants to communicate to this House.

**Mr. Harquail:** I hope the opposition heard that.

● (2050)

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. I would hope that the opposition members would take heed of your advice. I noticed the hon. member saying that I am not making any sense. I would expect that from him. One does not expect the senseless to make sense out of anything.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** That is the best self-destruction that I have heard for a long time.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** We have an energy problem in this country that the opposition has failed to discuss in any coherent fashion. We have the problem of regional disparity, which is an extremely important problem on which the opposition, as usual, is completely and totally divided. In the debate that is taking place in this House on Bill C-27, we have seen the opposition take every position in the political spectrum. The only consensus that they came up with was a silly amendment to put the onus on the cabinet or the governor in council to give them the power by order in council to decide the triggering time for qualifying periods and benefit periods in the country. That is a cop-out, sir. They will not say to the Canadian people whether or not they are in favour of the 12-week qualifying period. They will not say whether or not they are in favour of the benefit periods. They are cowards when it comes to policy in governing this nation.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An hon. Member:** Where do you stand on it?

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** When you people allow the bill to come back, I will tell you where I stand on it.

**An hon. Member:** Bring it tomorrow.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** We heard the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald), this afternoon, refer to the performance of the government as being absurd. That party must be the experts in absurdity in this country. There is nothing they have done in the time that I have been here that could not be considered absurd. Every position they take is absurd because of the fact that it ranges all the way

[Mr. Harquail.]

from the far left to the far right. At least the NDP is consistent in being naive about governing the country. The Official Opposition is not even consistent.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** *Merci beaucoup.*

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** *Il n'y a pas de quoi, mon ami.*

As the Minister of Transport has said, the opposition is not really interested in what goes through this House. It is interested only in delaying, on procedural points, the functioning of this House.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** It is time to bring the functioning of this House into the twentieth century so that those of us who are elected to represent the people can do what we were elected to do, instead of spending month after tedious month in this House putting up with the delaying tactics of the opposition and not being able to make the essential representations of our people that we need to do. That is an unfortunate turn of events because there are very many serious, fine, conscientious members of parliament in the opposition.

**Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Thank you.

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** The problem is that they have no leadership.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** They have a leader who won his position by default but has not got used to the fact that he has won, who does not know where he stands within his own party, and his party could not care less. That is the farce they present to the Canadian public. How long do they think that the Canadian public is going to be fooled by that kind of double standard?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** How can they expect the Canadian public to take things seriously when they have an opposition day and they do not even bother to come to the House? The Official Opposition of this parliament consists of ad hoc opportunism. That is the only way I know to describe it.

**Mr. Alexander:** Shame!

**Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi):** Shame for sure!

**An hon. Member:** You talk about your own minister; even Otto cannot take it.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I would hope that all hon. members would extend courtesy to the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) so that he may continue with his remarks.