

Dollar Items

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I will get up when you sit down.

Mr. Benjamin:—that if the public wanted a profit from public works operations like our streets, sidewalks, sewer and water systems, our post office and many other aspects of our society—

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): You are comparing apples and oranges.

Mr. Benjamin: I am not comparing apples and oranges. The hon. member would look better sitting there with an apple in his mouth and keeping his ears open.

Mr. Mazankowski: On a rotisserie.

Mr. Brisco: Where would you put the orange?

Mr. Benjamin: The Canadian Federation of Agriculture thinks that the actions of the minister are bad. That federation represents agricultural producers in every province. It disagrees with the Minister of Transport on tolls. This federation has not had an opportunity to discuss legislation with members of parliament. It submitted a brief many months ago. The minister and his predecessor have agonized over the St. Lawrence Seaway tolls, and the government has agonized over them for the last three or four years, but they have not had the courage to deal with them in parliament. The government chickened out with a \$1 item in the supplementary estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have to interrupt the hon. member because the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker,—

Mr. Epp: You smoked them out, Les.

Mr. Brisco: Take the apple out of your mouth.

Mr. Epp: And the orange off your head.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Hon. members opposite seem to be hung up on this business of the apple and the mouth. I am well aware of the animal to which they are alluding, but like that animal, they cast a longer shadow when they are sitting down than when they are standing up.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Friesen: You are a bore.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I would prefer to be that than an old sow.

An hon. Member: Discrimination!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): All afternoon we have been sitting here listening to hon. members opposite crying in their beer. They have presented a motion which reads as follows:

That in the opinion of this House the government's use of dollar items further diminishes the proper control of the House of Commons over expenditure, and additionally, circumvents the right of the House to fully discuss the creation of new policies, programs and agencies.

Mr. Epp: He can read.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): It is an interesting motion, and I would have liked to have heard hon. members opposite discuss it. Instead, however, as the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) and other speakers before him have said, they got up and railed about matters of procedure. It is becoming painfully obvious that what they are doing is perpetrating a cover-up of their own lack of policy alternatives.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): They claim that this House is under attack, and I agree that it is. It is being attacked by the Canadian public because little is being accomplished in this House, because of the opposition tactics of filibuster and delay.

An hon. Member: Tell that to MacEachen.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I have already told him, and he agrees that the opposition is out to frustrate the efforts of the government to fulfill the mandate it was given in the last election. The opposition has never accepted that mandate; hon. members think they know better than the Canadian public.

This is an opposition motion, but I wonder where the opposition is. Time and again on opposition days I have sat in this House and listened to debates on opposition motions, and time and time again I have wondered where the opposition was.

There are many important items of legislation on the order paper. There is one bill in particular which I personally would like to see back before the House for debate, and that is Bill C-27. We are talking about unemployment insurance and about alleviating the unemployment problems of this country. We are talking about paying benefits to those who are out of work. The opposition pays lip service to that, but talk is cheap. It takes money to buy jobs, and I would like to see the opposition put forward the proposals it has for dealing with this serious problem.

Mr. Goodale: They have none.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): They are interested in unemployment because they think they can make political hay out of it, but the fact is that the Canadian public is not interested in hearing that kind of rhetoric. If the opposition has proposals, it is strange that the latest Gallup poll turned out the way it did.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Harquail: They all stopped laughing when you mentioned the Gallup poll.