

Ministerial Responsibility

satisfied it expresses the view of the Canadian public with respect to the performance of this government.

We are drawing near the end of a session. What a session it has been, as we look back over it. The paradox which has become apparent to us day after day was first brought to light by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who, having condemned the policy of controls during an election campaign, finally marched before the television cameras and announced what can only be described as a deathbed repentance and adopted controls for himself.

In terms of agricultural policies, we have seen in the last few days the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) blame everybody. His policies have managed to do something which no minister of agriculture, as far as I am aware, in Canadian history—perhaps I will be corrected with respect to that—has been able to do, and that is to skewer both the producer and the consumer at the same time.

We sat in this House on the dramatic budget night a few days ago and heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) advance a budget which will do nothing for inflation or for unemployment, which managed to blame the Americans or somebody else for the failings of this government on the one hand, but which hitched its future to the United States on the other.

As Canadians look at this government, they see a rather sorry performance. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie) recently in this House, outside the House and even outside the country, said to the people of the Atlantic provinces that they are really to blame for the high price of energy there, and he advanced an energy strategy which is no more than a pricing strategy.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) came into the House not too long ago and decided, at long last, to cast the blame on India for the results of his policy respecting nuclear proliferation. When we consider that policy, we realize that all along it has been the carpet-bagging approach of this government in the important matter of nuclear proliferation to place the question of sales beyond and above the question of public morality.

Those are the failures, and as honestly and objectively as I usually look at these things, I have tried to find what this government can really show for over 300 days of parliamentary work, in terms of real accomplishments or changes for the better, for the lifestyle of Canadians and in terms of what Canadians can expect by way of leadership from the government and, quite frankly, I am hard put to come upon anything of that nature.

● (1600)

The government has blamed their failings on everyone but themselves. When it was convenient, they castigated labour. When it was convenient in another way, they blamed management. From time to time the farmer came in for a share of the blame. The workingman gathered his share of the blame for the policies of the government, and if they were stuck, as they were from time to time, for being scapegoats, so that they could sleep at nights—and I imagine it was an uneasy sleep—they blamed the provinces and the opposition, and they even came down once in a while to blaming the weather. Mr. Speaker, this is the litany of failure; it is also the litany of the denial of

responsibility by the government to account to the people of Canada, through this House, which it has not done.

I do not want to sell this government short, Mr. Speaker. Even a government dedicated to making a mess can sometimes outdo itself—in the dredging affair, the Sky Shops affair, the judges' affair—and if all these were not enough, let us not forget the "Orion" crash, the \$16 million disaster. This most unusual game they play in the House would have been comical had it not been a serious matter—the game of seeing the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Richardson) blame the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Goyer), on the one hand, and the next day on the volley-ball courts the Minister of Supply and Services casting the blame on the Minister of National Defence, and the Prime Minister straining himself to find some common ground between these two ministers who are the epitome and essence of the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. That showed itself to the people of Canada. Mr. Speaker, someone will deal later with the details of that matter.

The country has two answers to the Galaxy of Goofs that I have described. I should like to refer to an article by Richard Gwyn. The hon. member for Nipissing (Mr. Blais) asks where I found that. I found it in this article. To this Galaxy of Goofs, the latest goof is now being run out, excuses are being made, people are being blamed and answers are not being given. In his column in the *Montreal Star* of June 10, Mr. Gwyn said:

To tabulate the price taxpayers will pay for this Galaxy of Goofs is easy: \$16 million in penalties to Lockheed; several million in wasted defence department plans; a year's delay in the delivery of new anti-sub planes and anything up to \$50 million in inflationary costs that will have to be added to the new contract. About \$100 million in all which, if burnt as \$1 bills to heat a house would, quite literally, have been better spent.

Undecided is the price that will be paid by one minister... and by senior civil servants in three departments. Excepting Stopforth, who has been reassigned to spend a year on French, I will bet anyone one hundred million to one that the answer will be nothing.

Mr. Speaker, who stars in this saga? The Minister of National Defence, and the Minister of Supply and Services. One is exactly the same star who was involved in the saga of the overpriced oil not too long ago. What does he do? Does he come into the House and say he is sorry? Does he come into this House and account? Not likely. But he does have an answer for all that has gone on. He sums up his courage, rises in his place and blames it on a public servant. The public servant, Mr. Larry Stopforth—whom I do not know—denies the charge, threatens to sue the minister for libel if he does not retract, and the minister wraps himself in the swaddling clothes of parliamentary immunity and refuses to retract.

The Prime Minister, who ought to be an arbitrator in this dispute, did not even try to examine it. He did not come to the rescue of the public servant, nor did the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Chrétien) who had a hand in that Lockheed deal with the handwritten memorandum and who also has some responsibility to the public service of this country. Nor, may I note, did the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board, the hon. member for Ottawa West (Mr. Francis), who was formerly a public servant and was president of the Professional Institute of Public Servants of Canada at one time. None of them came to the rescue.