

*Ways and Means*

always been regarded as the financial spokesman or financial critic of his party. His responsibility has been to watch daily the financial affairs of our country, and especially the financial activities of our government. Yet in the interests of political expediency he was most unceremoniously and mercilessly dumped by his political party. By contrast, I am very happy that neither my national leader nor my house leader are so anxious for publicity that they would thus violate the ordinary rules of honour and decency, and I am also very proud at this moment that I do not belong to the Liberal party.

In this resolution we are being asked to vote money to the government of the day, but history has a way of taking many turns. The very origins of parliament were to provide a voice for the taxpayers in determining how the money necessary for the maintenance of law and order should be collected, but look how this has worked out. Under our rules we have now established an allocation of six days in which to debate the budget. We agree we ought to spend no more than six days debating how the money is to be collected; yet all of us know, and many of us regret, that we spend six, seven and eight months of the year discussing mere details of governmental expenditures. Readjustment of that situation is badly needed. We all know that a government requires at least minimum funds in order to sustain our society; yet under the existing situation we allocate only six days to a debate on how the money is to be collected and, as I have just said, we spend six to eight months of the year niggling about details of particular expenditures.

Looking at the financial policy of the government, I am afraid I must come to the conclusion that the government has no policy. Its financial policy is neither fish nor fowl. It is neither hot nor cold; it is lukewarm. It is something to be spewn out of the mouth as distasteful, and I expect the electorate of Canada will agree with me in that regard on June 18.

I was very disappointed with the attitude taken by the official Leader of the Opposition during his television appearance on budget night. The leader of the Liberal party in his television appearance on budget night really found nothing to complain about in the budget as it had been presented, except that it had arrived many years too late. I believe that the Canadian people will by now have noted that the leader of the official opposition has yet to present a real alternative to the financial policies of this government. Perhaps I am saying too much when I call them financial policies, because in my opinion the

actions of the government in the field of finance are very contradictory and I believe they can best be described in the quotation "John versus Don".

Last fall we read some rather interesting newspaper speculation to the effect that John was about ready to fire Don and move him into some other field of responsibility. However, I understand that St. James street and Bay street made adequate representations and Don managed to retain his present office. I was pleased—

**Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):** Do you believe all that bunk?

**Mr. Regier:** I was pleased to read the end result, Mr. Chairman, because despite the fact that I disagree with the basic Tory and reactionary policies of our Minister of Finance, I would hate to think of the condition our country would be in today if the irresponsible economic and financial attitudes of our present Prime Minister had been able to prevail within the councils of the government. I would rather live with the financial policies, even though I hope it would not be for too many years, of Bay street and St. James street as represented by the present Minister of Finance than live in a country dominated by the lack of knowledge and the financial and economic irresponsibility of a Prime Minister who seems quite prepared to increase a deficit to the tune of \$100 million in the interests of four constituencies and in the interests of only 100,000 people; who is quite prepared to be irresponsible and spend \$15 million, which is only a preliminary expenditure, on behalf of two constituencies; who is quite prepared to be irresponsible and advocate the abolition of tolls on a couple of bridges in order to bribe a few more constituencies back into the Tory camp. In the face of irresponsibility of that type I would prefer the traditional Tory financial atmosphere even though I hope I would not have to live with it for many years.

Our government is responsible for the economic welfare of the Canadian community. The United States of America is always regarded as the heart of so-called free enterprise, the heart of capitalism. I would like to think that the government of Canada would be at least as bold as the President of the United States in that he was recently so amazingly successful and was able to call to task the steel corporations of his country. Over there a steel corporation, Mr. Chairman, is spelt s-t-e-e-l. I am afraid that in Canada we have far too many s-t-e-a-l corporations and this government, like the one before it, seems quite prepared to allow a policy of s-t-e-a-l to continue *ad nauseam*.