



The splendor of Arabia

The splendor of the great Arabian Horses shown along with the beautiful costume of

the rider during the Markham Santa Claus Parade Saturday. Mike Gerhardt

Hodgson angry over opposition tactics

By Bill Hodgson MPP

A week or so ago the legislature was debating a bill designed to provide some much needed aid to our senior citizens. The opposition members, in a display that was as irresponsible as any I have seen in my time in the House, seized the occasion to play petty partisan politics. Setting political expediency above the public interest is offensive at any time but in this case their tactics came very close to depriving needy elderly pensioners of a welcome Christmas bonus.

Let me give you some of the background. Back in October the government decided that a good many of our old-age pensioners, confined to fixed incomes, were being severely squeezed by the increases in the cost of living.

Accordingly, it was determined that if the federal government wouldn't help them, the province as a matter of humanity should. A bill

was introduced to provide for a one-time payment of \$50 to everyone in Ontario 65 years of age or over who is presently in receipt of the federal guaranteed income supplement. This involves an expenditure by the province of over \$17 million and a special expenditure of this nature must be approved by the legislature. That is as it should be.

The intention was that this money should be received by the people in the first week or so of December so that they could have it in time for Christmas shopping if they wished. Consequently, the cheques were prepared with a date of November 28th and you can imagine it takes a while to prepare over 340,000 cheques.

There is a legal technicality that enters at this point. The government must have the authority to issue these cheques on or before their date and it wouldn't have that authority until the bill passed third reading and received Royal Assent.

The Lieutenant-Governor was standing by ready to give Royal Assent by midnight that night as soon as the bill was given third reading. The opposition, principally the socialists, then proceeded to do everything they could to prevent passage in time. It turned out later that there was some doubt as to the validity of that legal opinion but no one knew it until it was too late to matter. As far as the House was concerned that night, if new cheques had to be prepared, it was physically impossible to distribute them until the new year.

The substance of the N.D.P. position was that old age pensions are presently inadequate and should be raised. No one really disputes this. But they also know full well that this is a matter of primarily federal authority and, secondly, that the whole subject is presently being studied at the federal-provincial ministerial level with an overhaul of the scheme expected in the not too distant future. Their argument, as far as this bill was concerned, was irrelevant. Even if the Ontario Government had the power or the money (and it has neither) it could hardly put it together in a couple of hours on a Wednesday evening.

The Liberals didn't have any particular point to make - they are just against anything. Despite all the filibustering, the bill was ready for third reading at 9:50 p.m. Tuesday.

The House, by the rules, sits to 10:30. There was plenty of time and it was accordingly called for third reading. Debate on third reading is rare since everything to be said has been said before that time (usually more than once).

The opposition, however, wasn't through obstructing and in a desperate attempt to stop passage, they claimed that a bill can't be given third reading on the same day that it receives second reading.

Now I have sat in this Chamber for six years and I can recall any number of occasions when this has been done without any challenge. Nevertheless, they argued up to 10:30 and when the House Leader moved that the House sit beyond the normal hours - which he has every right to do - they even called for a vote on that. That vote wasn't taken until nearly midnight because the

N.D.P. members simply would not show up for it till then.

The whole sorry spectacle wasn't over yet. Various technical ploys were tried, none of which had anything to do with the bill, but were designed only to try to wear the government down.

Such politically self-seeking tactics are silly and transparent at any time but when they risk harming a deserving segment of our people, they are deplorable. Senior citizens in this province, I know, will be thankful that the government stuck to its resolve.

Anniversary
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Pollard, Fairview Avenue celebrated their fourteenth wedding anniversary last week.

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Farm Safety

Fall bad time for accidents

With cool weather now upon us, and ice and snow just around the corner, the "fall" season is with us in more ways than one. The slippery conditions fostered by cold weather, snow and ice increases the risk of on-farm injuries caused by falls, say Don Brown

THE "JOLLEE" Philosopher

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Farm Safety

Fall bad time for accidents

Surprisingly, falls are a cause of one-third of all farm injuries in the United States and are a serious threat to life and limb at any time of year. A high proportion of such accidents can be prevented with a little extra care and caution.

Alertness is the best weapon against accidental falls. Illness, undue haste, fatigue, emotional upset, effects of alcohol or drugs, all make a fall more likely. Avoid potentially hazardous chores when any of these conditions prevail.

Falls occur most frequently in cluttered working quarters, on slippery surfaces caused by ice, snow, mud, water or oil slicks, and where flooring is broken and/or rickety ladders.

To lessen the chances of falling under these conditions, keep all stairs well-lighted and in good repair, do not carry a vision-blocking load, schedule regular clean-ups of work areas, and always set ladders on a firm footing.

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