

Any Liberal-NDP Union Squelched by Glib Fisher

By DON HANRIGHT

OTTAWA (CP) — Whatever hopes may have existed for a Liberal-New Democrat alliance of the so-called "liberally-minded left" were effectively dashed in the Commons Thursday night by Douglas Fisher.

In a blunt—almost brutal—assessment of the Liberal party that was both funny and funereal, the New Democratic Party's intellectual from Port Arthur performed with a relish that established him as a professional. One excerpt:

"Today the fact is that genuine liberalism is called for. But the bitter conclusion I have to reach is that genuine liberalism has been all but stifled in the very party which nurtured it in this country and claims to nurture it and which considers itself to have a chance of forming the next government."

He particularly attacked J. W. Pickersgill (L — Bonavista-Twilligate) and the claim of "administrative genius" in the Liberal party. This claim he labelled as "the Pickersgill dogma."

"This is paradoxical—well, it is just damn queer, that's what it is," said Mr. Fisher. The statement "we know how to govern" was conservatism—"blimpism."

GALLERY APPLAUDS

This brought rare, spontaneous and quite illegal snickers and applause from the public galleries, crowded in anticipation of the throne-speech vote that was to follow in about half an hour.

Mr. Fisher's remarks were given added weight through his position as chairman of the New Democratic Party caucus.

He noted that Mr. Pickersgill has referred to Senator Wallace McCutcheon, former Argus Corporation vice-president now cabinet minister without portfolio, as the "barefoot boy from Bay Street"

What then did Mr. Pickersgill think of the Liberal party's "impetuous members" such as Walter Gordon (Toronto Davenport), John Turner (Montreal St. Lawrence-St. George) and John R. Nicholson (Vancouver Centre)?

"Which party came up with

the most money to throw around during the last election? Which party do you find the favorite among the big businessmen you meet?

"Which party has taken over the Madison Avenue type mastery of the slick guff and reiterated banalities, such as the boys jumping off the bus? The answer is rather obvious. . . .

"The senior civil service caste—the mandarin caste if you prefer—has been allowed to set the tone of the party."

Mr. Fisher said that if the party has this administrative genius and yet draws the support of "superb fellows" like Newfoundland Premier Joseph Smallwood and Saskatchewan Liberal Leader Ross Thatcher, "surely there is some reason why we hesitate to see this Liberal party as the means for Canada's salvation — as a chance for us to get a party of the democratic left."