

Supply

Nova Scotians were anxious to ensure that consumers of electric power in their province would have access to alternative sources of supply, and that coal miners in Cape Breton, which has a great deal of trouble selling its coal because it has a high sulphur content, could go on producing the coal that would be beneficial, eventually, to Nova Scotians. Last night, the Premier of Nova Scotia, Mr. Buchanan, asked me during a telephone conversation to forget this partisan quarrel and to make sure that in future the people of Cape Breton and Nova Scotian consumers would be able to benefit from their own natural resources.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[English]

Mr. Chrétien: I think it is a scandal that these people again, for a matter of diversion, love to make accusations or try, as they often do.

[Translation]

There was a gentleman in my riding by the name of Fernand D. Lavergne, and the Right Hon. Prime Minister has met him—who gave me the following advice: Jean, in politics, when the mudslinging starts, do not worry. The mud will dry out and fall to the ground. In English, they say:

[English]

He who throws dirt, loses ground.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: Those are two proverbs. I have been a Minister for a long time. I have my own rules, and I will tell you one of my rules. The instructions that I have given to my staff are that whenever a Member of Parliament calls, he or she should have priority for my attention, whatever their Party affiliation may be. People who have served in this House and have had the guts at one time in their life to run for Parliament will always receive a phone call from me and I will always accept their calls.

• (1620)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Clark: Potential delegates—

[English]

Mr. Chrétien: Come on! You need that. You have a Member of your Party who calls you dog food that nobody wants to buy. We are not that dirty with you. You are looking for delegates, and I wish you the best luck possible. We love you too. You have a great career as Leader of the Opposition.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: This is what disgusts me the most. I have been the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Minister of National Revenue, the President of the Treasury Board, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Justice, and

the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, because I spent 20 years of my life in this House serving the people. When I leave, should I go on Sparks Street with a tin can and ask the people to help a poor guy who worked for the Government of Canada?

As the rules apply, it is not forbidden for former Ministers to call Governments. They can do that. The problem is to make sure that they do not get privileged access. It is exactly what happened with this file. The officials bent over backwards to make sure that not only did he not have any privilege but that there was no appearance of privilege. They told me privately, when I asked them if they felt at any time they had been lobbied, that they had not. They said they had been dealing in this case exactly the way they could have dealt with any citizen of Canada.

With respect to those who try to destroy people by character assassination, there is a proverb which I learned today in the English language, and I think it is still true, which says "He who throws dirt, loses ground".

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Beatty: Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) could draw that aphorism to the attention of the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Mr. Munro), particularly following his speech today.

I want to ask the Minister a question with respect to a statement that he made today. He indicated that the document entitled "Scotia Coal Synfuels" dated September 13, 1982, was not a Cabinet document and was, in fact, an internal memorandum. Why is it that yesterday he said that first, he was tabling all relevant documents, particularly all letters between Mr. Gillespie and the Government and, second, "all internal memoranda relating to the project for the same time period". He continued to say, as reported at page 23142 of yesterday's *Hansard*:

The only relevant documents which I am not tabling are those which are in Cabinet confidence, in this case submissions to the Treasury Board.

If that is the case, why has this document never been tabled in the House by him?

Mr. Chrétien: Mr. Speaker, he already has it. If he wants me to give him another copy I will get a copy made and send him one. It was available. It was quoted from by the former Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Nielsen: Give us a copy.

Mr. Chrétien: I do not mind. I do not have it but I will check it out. I asked what that document was and they said it was an internal memorandum. The former Leader of the Opposition, who we hope will be back in his job soon—

Mr. Nielsen: Me too.

Mr. Chrétien: —quoted it as a Cabinet document, and I say that it was not one.