

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes, what about defence policy? It is in the motion.

An hon. Member: Be quiet. He will give you defence policy in a moment.

Mr. Churchill: Defence policy is a subject on which I would welcome debate with the hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin).

Mr. Martin (Essex East): That would be a pleasure.

Mr. Churchill: He will perhaps recall that in the days when we were in opposition he did not participate in the defence debates of this house—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): We had a good government in those days.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill:—and I doubt very much if he will participate effectively in any debate on defence policy.

Mr. Woolliams: I would think the scandal of Hong Kong would still be around his neck.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): You don't know what is going to be around your neck.

Mr. Churchill: The Leader of the Opposition has accused the government of lack of decision. There is no man in Canada so decisive in indecision as the Leader of the Opposition. I know of no subject which he has debated—and I have listened to him here for 12 years—with regard to which he has not been on both sides of the subject. He tries to give the appearance of boldness. He talks about boldness. It is the boldness of a rabbit. He talks about action, "Let us have action". The action that he shows is action in retreat. That is what happened today; he dodged the issue; he retreated and evaded the topic that he was so keen to discuss the other day. He has suggested that there is confusion and indecision in dealing with the business of the house, and I have been waiting for several sessions to deal with this subject—

Mr. Teillet: That is normal for you.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: This is the first opportunity I have had to deal with the organization of the business of the house, despite the criticisms session after session about the business of the house, and I would suggest to some hon. members opposite that I will publicly expose them if they are not very careful—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill:—because if they talk to me—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

Mr. Churchill:—because if they talk to me about changing the order of business of the house I will indicate to the house the people from the various parties who have come to me and asked me to set aside certain pieces of business because they were going to be away the next day.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Churchill: I have accommodated them on almost every occasion, because that is one of the amenities of parliamentary life.

Mr. Crestohl: How very gallant.

Mr. Churchill: Mr. Speaker, it has been suggested to us by the leader of the Social Credit party that there has been a failure in organizing the business of the house. The words of his amendment are:

—and has failed to organize the business of the house so that the 1963-64 estimates and budget could be introduced.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Nowlan) has indicated that the estimates for 1963-64 will be introduced very, very soon. He has indicated time and again that the budget for 1963-64 will be brought down earlier than is usual.

Mr. Matheson: What about the estimates for last year?

Mr. Churchill: Surely that would satisfy any hon. member in this house.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Churchill: In the course of his remarks he said that we need really to get moving to provide the necessary legislation. Well, Mr. Speaker, the question of the legislation of the House of Commons is a matter of considerable importance, and in this cover which I hold in my hand is the legislative program of the house for this session, with two or three more bills to come.

Mr. Pearson: Does that include the divorce bills?

Mr. Churchill: The legislative program was outlined in the speech from the throne. The bills following up that program have been introduced in this house, and here they are. They have been waiting for weeks for the house to get on with them.

An hon. Member: Why don't you get on with them?

Mr. Churchill: The opposition has not given us the chance that we would like to have.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Churchill: You may laugh now, but you will not laugh by the time I have finished, because I will demonstrate how you have