

himself confronted with what is likely to be the most formidable task of his career, that of persuading the people of Canada to support the program he has put forward and, what is more difficult still, to believe in the government's sincerity.

I am shocked at the line taken by the President of the Treasury Board. Surely, there are members of his staff who have read our motion. We are not saying that cuts should be made here, or there, or somewhere else. The minister's own colleagues have been going around the country telling us that the economy is in a dangerous situation, that the Canadian people must realize the seriousness of the position, and that the government, as proof of its sincerity, intends to do something about it. What we are saying is: show us. This is the test.

Members opposite have the unparalleled audacity to ask the people of Canada to make the sacrifices which will be necessary to accommodate government policy, while lacking the nerve, the energy or the wit to come before parliament and say, "Here is what we intend to do when it comes to restraining our own spending." Do not talk about the restraint shown in the budget of June, 1975. All that happened then was that the former minister of finance, beating his breast, told us, "I had to do a terrible thing; I had to tell my colleagues they could not get all the money they were asking for. I had to cut them down." But we never saw the comparative figures. He did not tell us what the original figures were. His protestations were a load of garbage, and the minister knows it. If he had tabled the original requests and shown how they were cut down, we might have had some respect for his decision. But all he told us was that he had made these cuts. We do not accept that. It is a lot of nonsense.

Even if our motion had been couched along those lines, the minister's response was a flop. But it was not couched in those terms. It states that the government should set an example to other Canadians by forthwith indicating the nature and the extent of the restraints it was prepared to accept. That is what we are asking: either put up or shut up. If the government is prepared to exercise restraint, let the House and the country be told by what means. Until the government does so, no one will believe what it says.

I say, in all sincerity, that I do not like the government's program in detail. I do not think it will work as presently set up. But I am one of those who took part in the debate and said I was prepared to make an effort to bring about a bill which would work; and we need a bill which is going to work because the country cannot continue much longer under the type of fiscal and monetary programs the government has foisted upon us. I know the President of the Treasury Board did not have much time in which to prepare for this debate. But, equally, we did not have much time in which to put down our motion. I should have thought the minister would have guessed this was the kind of motion the official opposition would put forward under present conditions. But if the minister had come here today and instead of his tired old speech had given us a firm indication of what he was going to do, the position would be vastly improved. However, he does not intend to, and the reason is that he does not know how; he hasn't the faintest idea.

Government Spending

Mr. Chrétien: What about the reduction in man-years for next year—1.5 per cent?

Mr. Woolliams: That is like going out to buy a Cadillac and ending up with a Chevy: you have saved money.

Mr. Baldwin: The trouble is there are too many of these artful dodgers, and artful dodgers cannot easily sell a program of the kind the government has brought down. But unless they do, the program is doomed to failure. I am not going to deal with them *per se* because they are now in committee, but I can deal with what is collateral to the proposal in the bill, namely, fiscal and monetary policy.

● (1700)

We are dealing with fiscal policy here, in the sense that there has to be some restraint. If the government cannot do any better two months from now than it is doing today, then this program is going to be a sham, a failure and the country is going to be in a mess. What will the government do then? This is why we have provided this opportunity for the government to give us some earnest ideas of its determination and its intentions with regard to these issues.

This is a public relations exercise with gigantic stakes—the survival of this country as an effective economic unit for a great many years to come. They are the stakes that exist in this program the government has put forward. If the government can do no better than the minister has today, then it will be in trouble. I can understand why the public and the press reaction to the attempts of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Macdonald) and others to make the program stand up and to appear to be a reasonable and logical one has been universally so negative. I feel that this is at the root of the issue we are now facing.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Are you now going to tell us what Senator Lawson said?

Mr. Baldwin: I think that is an irrelevant question. My friend probably knows him a lot better than I do, and I am sure he can deal with Senator Lawson. I dealt with his leader; he can deal with the senator. But I should not say too much about the other place in front of the hon. member. In any event, I just want to touch for a moment on the budget and on the budgetary deficit. I think the President of the Treasury Board, perhaps quite naïvely and innocently, misrepresented or misstated certain facts and possibilities. In the first place, I support what my leader said and I challenge the minister to tell us what the deficit will be. Both he and I know that supplementary estimates will be brought in. What will they be, and how much? I challenge the minister to put those facts on the record.

My belief is that the government will be very careful not to bring into the House the total package of supplementary estimates before Bill C-73 has been passed. We would only be looking at that part of the iceberg that is above the water, not at the gigantic part that lies below. I suggest to the members of this House that the total amount of supplementary estimates the government will be bringing in will substantially alter the balance of payments and the fiscal situation of the treasury, making it look completely different from the one envisaged by the former minister of finance. This is one of the reasons we