

*Business of the House*

which the hon. member asked for. The whole story will be in *Hansard*. What does he want to do beyond this?

**Mr. Starr:** He wants the opinion of the Auditor General now.

**Mr. Benson:** Why do you wish that? You have an opinion from the law officers of the crown.

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Chairman, let us have one thing clear. The law officers of the crown are servants of the crown. They give their opinions to the crown. The Auditor General is a servant of parliament, and I think that it is right that we should have the opinion of a servant of parliament. In respect of the legal opinions the government receives, the hon. member for York-Humber referred to an earlier matter in respect of which the law officers of the crown gave one opinion to the Conservative government in 1962 and the very opposite opinion to the Liberal government in 1963. I do not wish to re-open that argument, but surely parliament has the right to ask one of its committees to seek the opinion of a servant of parliament.

**Mr. Churchill:** I should like to congratulate the Minister of National Revenue. Perhaps this will soften him up. I congratulate him for being so quick to disclose all the information which is available to him with regard to these transactions. In this regard, his action is materially different from that of the Minister of National Defence. I congratulate the minister for being very prompt with us today. Having gone that far, I cannot agree with his obstruction at the present time. I suspect that because the government has found a neat little method by which it can avoid trouble on interim supply in the future, it is going to hang on to this. The hon. member for Peace River suggested this in a speech he made yesterday.

This amazing little contingency fund, item 15a under the Department of Finance, is just a gold mine recently discovered. Now, it is going to be mined right to the hilt and there will be shafts sunk. They will dredge up all the money they want now under item 15a to use for any purpose they like. This is a blank cheque to the government. I stand here as a protector of the rights of parliament and the taxpayers of this country. I have not heard any

argument advanced which carries any weight contrary to my view that the servant of parliament, the Auditor General, should be consulted with regard to this practice. If this is not done, then we will have to raise this issue again, again and again. It may be years before it is solved. It could be solved by the Auditor General between now and Christmas if the minister would accept our reasonable proposition that this matter be referred to the public accounts committee. In that event, I would hope that the members of the committee, as a result of the discussion here in the House of Commons, would feel that the Auditor General should be called to give an opinion.

I note that it is now six o'clock, Mr Chairman.

**An hon. Member:** Carry on.

**Mr. Starr:** We are not prepared to carry on, Mr. Chairman. I think the reasonable request which has been made by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre is one to which consideration should be given by the government overnight, and possibly tomorrow they might see the reasoning behind this request. It is a very reasonable request, and perhaps they might accede to it.

Progress reported.

• (6:00 p.m.)

**BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**

**Mr. Nicholson:** Mr. Speaker, last night this house gave second reading to Bill No. C-241, to amend the National Housing Act. We then considered the bill clause by clause in committee and it was reported, but third reading was held over until today. It is my hope that this house is now agreeable to giving the bill third reading, because there is a time factor involved.

**Mr. Starr:** Mr. Speaker, I think the normal practice after second reading and the completion of the committee stage, is to hold over third reading until the following day. I suggest third reading of this bill be the first item of business for tomorrow.

It being three minutes after six o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.