

*Alleged Lack of Government Leadership*

in a day of such prosperity that they still boast about it, to give them \$6 a month. These people, Mr. Speaker, talk to this parliament and to the country about leadership, decisiveness, imagination and boldness; people who have shown throughout the years such adherence to the shibboleths and the blindness of the establishment in the present society; as to have condemned themselves as incapable of leadership before or now or in the future.

What is that leadership about which the Leader of the Opposition talks? Everyone in this house knows that an election is bound to come. It is bound to come within days or within weeks. Everybody in this country knows that, and now that the leader of the Social Credit party has had dinner it may come within days rather than within weeks. Everybody in Canada knows that; everybody in Canada understands that; but what in my experience the people of Canada do not understand is the timid manoeuvring of the government in the last while to avoid defeat at any cost instead of presenting to parliament and to the people a program on which they would be prepared to go down, if go down they must, having made some real attempt to serve this country.

What the people also do not understand is the Liberals' indecent haste to scramble over to the treasury benches, not on any positive program which they present but on the growing disgust of the Canadian people with the inaction and indecision of the government.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. gentleman would permit me to ask a question?

**Some hon. Members:** Sit down.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Why is the hon. gentleman so sure that the Liberal party will win the election?

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, if I may be permitted a personal remark about a gentleman for whose friendship I have great regard—and I hope it continues—I have learned since being a member of this house that the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate (Mr. Pickersgill) would rather make some kind of political remark, relevant or irrelevant, than discuss anything of value or of substance, and the temptation to make political remarks is typical of his questions. Not only am I not sure that the Liberals will win the next election, I am confident the Liberals will not win the next election. The sad fact of the present Canadian political situation is that the people of Canada from coast to coast—

[Mr. Lewis.]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Will the hon. member yield the floor to an hon. lady?

**Mr. Lewis:** What else can I do in view of your question, Mr. Speaker?

**Miss LaMarsh:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to inquire of the hon. member if he is sufficiently confident the Liberals will not win the next election to put it to the test tomorrow night by voting against the government and for the amendment.

**Mr. Lewis:** There is another remark, Mr. Speaker, that so completely proves one of the points I am trying to make, that the hunger of that bench to become this bench overrides every other consideration. It reminds me, Mr. Speaker, of nothing more than what I read in 1958 about the way the Leader of the Opposition simply said to the Prime Minister, "Please move over; I want to take your place."

I suggest to this house that there is one issue which has emerged in the last few days which has become the most important one in Canada, indeed the most important one which Canadians will ever face. I suggest to you that above all people the Leader of the Opposition, who made a definite statement on the policy of nuclear weapons the other day—I am referring to the first one, before he retraced and retracted—as a man of great experience and great accomplishment in the field of international relations, should have placed before this house clearly the question of nuclear weapons so that we would tell the government what the majority of us believes in connection with this matter of life and death. He should have placed that before this house, instead of the general gaff about the breakdown of unity in the cabinet and lack of leadership, or the general gaff of the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Thompson) about a clear policy—

**Mr. Thompson:** Defence policy, say it.

**Mr. Lewis:**—defence policy being required. I am going to show the hon. gentleman in five minutes, if he will give me a chance, that there is no doubt about the government's policy on nuclear weapons. If he followed the speeches in this house, if he bothered to read the letter of the minister who resigned this morning and the reply of the Prime Minister, he would know that, too.

**Mr. Thompson:** Somebody else interpreting policy.

**Mr. Lewis:** I am not interpreting policy, I am just reading the policy given out and I commend to the hon. member for Red Deer to do the same. It would help him, to read some of these things.