

parliament. The hon. member has been, in that role, a dedicated member of parliament and I now wish him well in his new role as the hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as a rule, when statements are made by the various House leaders in this House of Commons I have to await my turn as the House leader of the third party. This is a red-letter day for me because I get in second.

Mr. Marshall: You deserve better.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I thank the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Marshall) for his suggestion, but may I say that it is a distinct pleasure for me to join with the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) in expressing these words of appreciation of the work that the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) has done as the House leader for the official opposition. It has been my pleasure to know the hon. member for Peace River since, I believe, 1962. We have been associated as members of that local union known as the House leaders' club since 1968, and indeed we have become not just colleagues in that role but warm and close friends.

The Minister of Justice is quite right in his assertion that the hon. member for Peace River has been most useful when it has been necessary to achieve co-operation to speed up the business of the House. I may say he has also always been very effective when the aim was to slow down the business of the House. In any case, not only has he done well as the spokesman for his party in the inter-party negotiations that have had to take place, but he has made a contribution to the effective working of this House of Commons as a parliamentary institution.

It is good to know that we are not indulging in some kind of obituary or final eulogy, as if this were the end of the road. I see by press reports that it is a beginning, the hon. member has been given a post that as a matter of fact may be superior to that of House leader, for he may be the eminence griesé who determines where and how this House goes from here on.

I was sorry when I learned a few weeks ago that the hon. member for Peace River was planning to leave his present post. I suppose I have to say that I have seen a number of Conservative House leaders come and go. Some of them I have been glad to see go, but not this one. So I join with the Minister of Justice in this tribute to the hon. member on the effective piece of work he has done. I also extend my congratulations to the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Bell) who, I understand, is to become the House leader for the Progressive Conservative party. We all know him well, and I think it will not be a difficult job at all for the other three of us to break him in to the role which he takes over.

I am glad that the Minister of Justice raised this point, and we shall look forward to an appropriate response from the distinguished and very honourable member of this House, the member for Peace River.

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I am deeply moved by the sentiments that have been expressed. As a matter of fact, if I have time after making these few comments I hope I will be able to get back to the media to

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revise some of the things I have been saying to them in the last half hour.

Let me say at once that I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience I have had over the past five years. It has been a long time. I will have from now until the middle of October to revert back to trying to become an ordinary human being, after being House leader, and this I say with deference to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) who, of course, has managed to undertake the task in his stride. I call him an extraordinary human being. During the course of our experience as House leaders, associating with several House leaders from the government side—at times the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) and others—we have tried to establish, through the medium of the House leaders' group, a "usual channels" type of institution to correspond with what we see in the United Kingdom but with a particular Canadian application.

I am one of those who are thorough believers in the virtues of this institution and what it can do. I know that as Your Honour sits up there you must sometimes, especially during the question period, wonder about the quality of those virtues. I am sure the government will agree with me when I say there is a need to have in a House of Commons an opposition to challenge, to scrutinize and to elevate the adversary system in the House of Commons so that the benefits which accrue to the people of Canada through it are not left in doubt. This is the point we have been working toward, and I think we have made some progress.

● (1540)

We have thoroughly enjoyed our relationship with the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), and I think it was a good thing to have had the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Macdonald) as government House Leader. He certainly constituted a very great challenge to us from time to time to work and achieve our objectives.

To make this a better House of Commons so that we can carry out our duties as the agent for our party is essential, but at the same time we must make sure that the business of the House, which is the business of the country, goes forward. This has been our objective. I am able to say that this has been an enjoyable, profitable and useful experience. I am quite convinced that my successor, who will have the confidence of our party, will continue in the same way as I have in trying to achieve those objectives.

I have enjoyed appearing before Your Honour, although I have not always won my arguments. Your Honour's decisions are not appealable, of course, but I am not suggesting we would win any appeal. I recall that when I was a very young lawyer practicing in Peace River, one of my first cases was defending a man who was charged with bootlegging. I thought I made a very good defence before the magistrate and I was young enough to feel that my argument should be accepted. The magistrate found against me, and I thought he had made a particularly bad decision. When he had left the chair, I jumped up and said, "Your Worship, I intend to appeal this case". The magistrate was half way to the robing-room but he turned around and returned to his chair saying, "Mr. Baldwin, I