

The Budget—Mr. Trudeau

microphones, launching the secret weapon of his House leader which is going to destroy this government at some unknown time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Maybe we will not have the chance of ever knowing what this knock-out power was, and for that reason alone I am sure you, Mr. Speaker, and experts in parliamentary procedure will be wondering till their dying days what the secret knock-out power was.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We will save it for the Tories.

Mr. Trudeau: So we have, if I can change my metaphor, David the daisy, plucking his petals one by one: Will we have an election, will we not have an election; will we, will we not—a game which he has played on television.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Oh, come on; you are in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I know you were not in the chair a moment ago, but I think if you had been you would smile at the hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) coming to the defence of the leader of the NDP who, I think from the smiles in this House, was referring to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) by his first name just a few minutes ago. The hon. member for Edmonton West was here and I did not see him express shock. He has suddenly found friends to his left and he thinks he had better be nice to them in case they might change their minds.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a tone of "just under the surface desperation" about the attitude of the NDP in these circumstances. I think with this game they have been playing, of giving power and withdrawing power, with the differences with the government being reconcilable one day, another day the differences with the government being irreconcilable and the next day the differences with the government being almost irreconcilable, it must be tiring to try to be reconciling and unreconciling all the time.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Trudeau: Why now, at this irresponsible time, on a budget which even though it is not perfect and might not go far enough still does reduce taxes, still does give benefits to the veterans and still does take \$800 million away from the giant corporations they do not like?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: I believe the explanation is that in this exercise of being able, as they think, to extend power or to withdraw power they have suddenly begun to feel the

[Mr. Trudeau.]

strain. They have suddenly realized—I am not sure if the axiom should be that power corrupts, or the lack of power corrupts; but whichever way you take it, I am not referring to any moral vicissitudes—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Lewis: You are bad enough as the Prime Minister; don't try to be a psychiatrist.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You are thin-skinned.

Mr. Trudeau: I must admit that I am not attacking the moral principles of the hon. member for York South.

Mr. Lewis: Just don't try to be a psychiatrist.

Mr. Trudeau: I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that when I used the word "corrupt" it had nothing to do with moral virtue or lack of it. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that in my eyes he is still as white as a seagull.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: What is being corrupted, Mr. Speaker, is his equanimity, his sense of balance and his ability to remain cool, as we just saw a few moments ago.

An hon. Member: Some marriages just don't last.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, power weighs heavily on someone who is doctrinaire. Power is difficult to exercise for one who thinks one can only have absolute truths, absolute virtues and absolute actions.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: In the period of time when the NDP was sitting in this parliament and did not quite hold the balance of power, or when the government could survive with other minority parties, this was an enjoyable time for them. Of course, the period from 1968 to 1972 was a perfect time for them because then they could state truths to their hearts content; they could go to the end of every one of their principles and demand and have rejected the most outlandish requests they had made at any time upon the budget of this nation, because they knew they would not have to face the electorate as a result. What the NDP has demonstrated today is that the best parliament for them is a parliament in which we are the majority and they are a small minority, unable to influence the power and the life of that parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1750)

ROYAL ASSENT

[Translation]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod, as follows: