

Government Spending

companies. The study was then shelved and has never been used. I suggest this was all done because the government wanted to delay things for two years as it had no policy at all. What did the President of the Treasury Board say when the hon. member for Victoria raised that point this afternoon? The minister said: Don't talk about peanuts; it is only \$11 million. That is the attitude that runs throughout this whole government and that is why we are having this debate tonight. We say that the government should put its house in order because, if it did so, that might add credibility to its program, and Canadians would then accept the program and for nationalistic purposes carry it out.

Some years ago the Liberals hired a truth squad headed by Judy LaMarsh. I recall something that happened at a meeting during the time of that truth squad. The right hon. gentleman and member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) was giving that truth squad what it deserved, and he was telling the truth about its activities. Some man at the back of the hall, incidentally in my leader's province, said, "Give them hell, John". The right hon. gentleman then replied, "When I am telling the truth about the Liberals it sounds like hell to them." That is about the truth of the situation. There is no credibility as far as this government is concerned with its ministers of today.

An hon. Member: You are still grinning, Eldon.

Mr. Woolliams: I suggest that you should stop dreaming.

An hon. Member: Shame!

Mr. Woolliams: It is a shame, all right; it is a damn shame. The truth is that the government has been on an economic binge for the past seven years. The departments of government actually run this government. The President of the Treasury Board is a friend of mine, I hope, but I wonder about the experience of that man who now holds one of the most important jobs in this country. I may be wrong, and I hope I am, but I doubt that before he entered the House of Commons as a young man he had ever met with his banker to make sure he had enough capital in an enterprise to meet a payroll or to avoid going bankrupt, yet today he is the President of the Treasury Board and talks about credibility. We say there is no credibility, yet this minister is helping to run the biggest business in this nation.

The government is spending \$32 billion this year. The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) pointed out that there would be a deficit of something in the order of \$3 billion. I suggest it is likely to be closer to \$7.7 billion. Every budgetary prediction I have heard since the Liberals came back to office in 1965 has been out by 50 per cent to 100 per cent. The Liberals were never very good at predicting anything. They have been on a binge ever since the Pearson government and throughout the Trudeau government.

Mr. Chrétien: You should remember the budget of 1959-60.

An hon. Member: They don't want to remember that.

Mr. Woolliams: I would ask what experience the present Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) has had in his

[Mr. Woolliams.]

new field? He was the dean of a faculty at the Saskatchewan university. This was a respectable academic who became the Minister of Justice. Now he is the Minister of Transport. Does he really have the business experience necessary to analyze transportation problems?

An hon. Member: Oh, come on.

Mr. Woolliams: I am coming on, and I will come on a lot stronger. I wish you would listen to me.

An hon. Member: Will you be louder, too?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Woolliams: I wish you would listen. Does this minister have the experience required to analyze the facts?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Woolliams: You can shout loud and I will still answer; you do not have to worry about that. I always know when I am bothering the Grits' conscience by the noise they make. Have these ministers the experience to analyze the facts given them by the civil servants who basically run the government? These senior civil servants have just received a big increase in salary, up to \$6,000 a year. That certainly is an example of the government's restraint.

An hon. Member: Some restraint.

Mr. Woolliams: Have any of these ministers had the experience before they came to the House which would enable them to accept the responsibilities they now hold? They may all be academics, and I would not question the marks they got at their universities, but do they have the business experience to run the government? I suggest they do not, and that is the reason why we are today facing such economic chaos.

Mr. Chrétien: I am a lawyer like you, Eldon.

Mr. Woolliams: I listened to the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Leblanc), the President of the Treasury Board, and other Liberals today talk about uncontrollable expenses. These are the people who started these grandiose assistance plans.

Mr. Chrétien: You voted for them.

Mr. Woolliams: There are several I did not vote for. This government started these grandiose plans. Let us refer back to the debate on medicare. The Hall report pointed out that this grandiose scheme would cost the Canadian people approximately \$600 million. Mr. Hall also stated that if the government did certain things it wanted to do, the plan could cost \$2 billion.

When I pointed out these facts to the government at the time of the debate I was told that we should not worry about the expense because everyone was in favour of some kind of health coverage. The government went ahead with this grandiose plan.

The same thing happened in respect of the unemployment insurance fund. I remember in 1962 when the opposition abused the right hon. gentleman from Prince Albert and his government for spending \$300 million in one year more than was collected from the fund. Today the govern-