

*Public Accounts*

success but it does not take responsibility for the plans. I think it is important to make that clear, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Peters:** Mr. Speaker, could I ask a question of the Parliamentary Secretary? Is it not true that Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, in looking over the plans and recommendations to decide on behalf of Canada whether it has sufficient potential of success, could have supplied that same expertise in helping to develop the management of this plant?

**Mr. O'Connell:** Mr. Speaker, that is a hypothetical question. The role of the owner was to produce heavy water. In terms of the contract, it was not the role of Atomic Energy of Canada to give advice, in fact, advice was not sought. The hon. member will recall that Mr. Jerome Spevack, who was the owner of the process, held it as a secret process. It is not a situation in which one could give advice to the owner; it is a situation in which the contract was let to provide so much water and it was the responsibility of the owner to do that. Other owners are meeting their responsibility but we have to make it clear that the government of Canada, through its agent, does not accept responsibility for the operation of the plant.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Regional Development.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** One o'clock.

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, I think that, under the War Measures Act, when looking at the clock the Minister of Justice can say it is one o'clock!

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, why don't we introduce the next item and then call it one o'clock?

**Mr. Baldwin:** It has already been called.

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[Translation]

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS**

## REFERENCE TO STANDING COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND REPORT OF AUDITOR GENERAL

**Hon. John N. Turner (for the President of the Privy Council)** moved that the Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 1969, and the Auditor General's report thereon, and the evidence adduced by the committee during the past session in relation thereto be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

[English]

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Now, it is one o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock.

At one o'clock the House took recess.

[Mr. O'Connell.]

**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. The House will resume debate on the motion that was moved by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner), for President of the Privy Council and seconded by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin). Is the House ready for the question?

**Mr. Baldwin:** Mr. Speaker, is the Parliamentary Secretary not to give us his words of wisdom on this very interesting and complicated motion?

**Mr. Jerome:** Mr. Speaker, I thought I would hear first what the House Leader of the party opposite has to contribute.

**Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I can only hope that this degree of moderate wisdom will be, by a process of intellectual osmosis, carried over to those occupying the front benches opposite so that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his colleagues will learn to listen to the opposition before doing some of the stupid things they do.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An hon. Member:** You mean, that the opposition do.

**Mr. Baldwin:** This very interesting motion, Mr. Speaker, gives members of the House an opportunity to deal with several aspects of a matter to which reference has already been made. The motion reads:

That the Public Accounts for the year ended March 31, 1969, and the Auditor General's Report thereon, and the evidence adduced by the Committee during the past Session in relation thereto be referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

Of course you, Mr. Speaker, and hon. members of the House, will notice that this motion is included on the Order Paper as a government order. This is the result of a policy which has been announced by this party and, hopefully, supported by my friends who sit on my left, to this effect: that, with regard to the appointment, the operations and the terms of reference of committees generally, we are not prepared to be as free and easy as we have been in the past. This matter was discussed and the issues were referred to in the debate this House embarked upon at the time of the establishment of the joint committee of this House and the other place to deal with the constitution.

At that time, on behalf of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, I made certain points. I did so in a very friendly way and I propose to be reasonably friendly today. The points I made then were these: that we were becoming very concerned about the operation of committees and about the impact they were having on the capacity of this House to function efficiently and properly as a forum wherein could be debated the affairs of the people of Canada. It was because of our experience with committees last year, not only of this House but of the other