

roots. He said that on the basis of its past performance, the government does not deserve the confidence of this House to deal with employment, unemployment and other matters. I fully agree. If there were an alternative in this parliament that deserved our confidence, the situation would be indeed different. There is nothing in the record of this government in four and a half years that deserves the confidence of the members of the New Democratic Party. But there is nothing in the record of the Conservative Party in this country, with a majority government or a minority government, or in the record of the Leader of the Opposition while premier of Nova Scotia, that warrants our confidence.

• (1740)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**An hon. Member:** Will you tell that to the people of Nova Scotia?

**Mr. Lewis:** I have said that to the people of Nova Scotia, and I will say it again.

A newspaper man, Bruce Little, wrote these words. I did not check his arithmetic, but I think this passage is very interesting:

Nova Scotia has spent more money for every Nova Scotian on heavy water than the U.S. spent for every American on its moon program.

The difference is that the U.S. got a man on the moon and Nova Scotia did not get heavy water.

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

**Mr. Lewis:** I could spend the next 15 minutes indicating the record of the Leader of the Opposition and the Conservative Party, but I have no intention of doing so. I intend only to underline the following. The Leader of the Opposition chides me about having declaimed against the party of the corporate welfare bums which sits opposite. I want to remind him that I declaimed just as loudly against his party as a party of the corporate welfare bums.

Why did I do so? It was not because I accused the Leader of the Opposition of something he did not say. Let me read to him what he is reported to have said in Toronto, not years ago but on October 19, 1972, in the context of dealing with the subject I dealt with during the campaign:

I am not opposed to the established practices of providing incentives to corporations through the various devices of accelerated depreciation write-offs, deferred profits and the like. My experience in government persuades me that these are not only acceptable but they are, in many instances, essential.

On that basis, what right has he to say to me that I am following someone else in respect of corporate welfare bums? But if I have, I am in the very good company of the Leader of the Official Opposition.

He wants to know what the government will do about pensions, and he says to us in the New Democratic Party that we should not even give the government an opportunity to tell us what it has in mind because we cannot trust it to do anything. I waited to hear what he had to say about pensions, but the only thing my assistants were able to find was the policies and commitments of the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, dated September, 1972. On page 52 there is a heading, "The Stanfield Alter-

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native", dealing with poverty. All it says about old age pensions is that his party would maintain the present old age security and guaranteed income plan and remove the 2 per cent ceiling on the cost of living adjustment.

That gentleman wants me to assist him immediately; not one month, two months, three months or four months from now, but next Thursday. He wants me to assist him to take the position of the Prime Minister. I say to him that if we had a real alternative that we could feel in our hearts and in our minds, neither of those gentlemen who are tied to the corporate system of this country would be prime minister of Canada. But that is not in our hands. I say to the Leader of the Opposition, who has a great deal of patience, "Just be patient, Bob, your day may come; but I doubt very much whether you will do any better than Pierre". I must add that even the Conservative party would find it difficult to do worse.

Let me say one more thing in that regard, and I say it seriously to the hon. gentleman. There were some things which he and I, on behalf of our respective parties, demanded during the election campaign. We may have differed as to the method and as to the amount for old age pensioners and the like, but there were some things that we demanded from the government and said the people of Canada ought to have. We both agreed on these things.

With all the earnestness I have, I would ask him to lay aside for a few weeks this hunger for office and show in this parliament the concern for Canada and Canadians that he tried so hard to show, for obvious reasons, during the election campaign. I also ask that he and his colleagues join us in the New Democratic Party in making this parliament work and making this government produce on its promises. If it does not, then out it will go.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lewis:** I would expect the Leader of the Opposition to then be given an opportunity to show what he can do, and we will make exactly the same offer to him and his party: they will stay in office as long as they produce, but when they fail to do so they will go out the same way, no matter when the election may be. This is what parliament is all about. It is precisely because this kind of sequence is possible to this parliament that our party and caucus made the decision it did, to avoid this sort of frustration of dropping one government on Thursday of this week, and dropping another government three or four Thursdays hence and going to the people without result.

The Leader of the Opposition reminded Members of Parliament that at the opening of the last session of the previous parliament I said that the Trudeau years had been wasted years; that the people of Canada would show their frustration and anger when they next had an opportunity at the polls. On October 30, the Liberal party reaped what it deserved for its dismal performance from 1968 to 1972. The result is that there now sits a humbled government.

**Mr. Alexander:** I don't know about that.

**Mr. Lewis:** I did not say it was humble; I said it was humbled.

**Mr. Alexander:** That is different.