

*Auditor General*

**Mr. Baldwin:** What do you do with a dredge, boil it or fry it?

**Mr. Chrétien:** Those guys are close to the stove now. We will see whether the judge decides to put them on the stove or not. That is not our function.

**Mr. Baldwin:** You hid it until after the 1972 election.

**Mr. Chrétien:** This is the system we use because we do not want to tarnish the reputation of people for no reason. We should not do that. We should respect the rights of people, but with all these rumours that circulate a lot of people become cynical about politicians.

I have been in this House for a long time, and let me tell you that there are very few guys who sit in this place who are crooked; but because of all this innuendo all politicians are put in the same basket. What we must have is respect for this House and the elected people in this country. In order to get this we must collectively stop this kind of nonsense.

When we have an accusation to make we should make it, and then stand by it. That used to be the rule in parliament, but the situation is no longer like that. This is why people are cynical about us as politicians. The people who come here to all parts of the House are members who want to serve, but people are cynical about members here because too many people play this little game to score political points.

As a result of the poll conducted in Quebec last week we are now right down in the last position. This is a result of these innuendoes and unsupported accusations, and I say this is unjust. Most members of parliament have lost a lot of money and have made many personal sacrifices in order to serve their constituents, no matter to what party they belong. By playing this little game we, as members of parliament, are destroying each other. We have reached the point that it is sometimes embarrassing to admit to being in public life. We should be very careful in trying to score political points at the expense of the other guy, because this is why our political reputations are going down the drain.

We should spend our time trying to be more constructive and attempting to pass good legislation. We should put our accusations on the table. This is what the government does, and then it stands on its own feet. Hon. members should make their accusations and the government will listen to them and then take action.

**An hon. Member:** The government never listens.

**Mr. Alexander:** You listen but you don't act.

**Mr. Chrétien:** Mr. Speaker, I think my time has expired so I will thank hon. members for giving me the opportunity to practice my bad English.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, we have had a pretty full and entertaining afternoon. Perhaps the House would consider calling it six o'clock now.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it agreed that we now call it six o'clock?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock tonight.

At 5.55 p.m. the House took recess.

#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Madam Speaker, the speeches made this afternoon by the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) and the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Chrétien) are the kind of speeches one likes to follow in the sense of wanting to reply to some of the points that have been made. That is a temptation to which I may yield for a moment, but actually I take part in this debate because I have a suggestion I should like to make. It is not the kind of suggestion that will be acted on tonight or tomorrow morning. However, it is something I should like to throw into the discussion which takes place with regard to the question of parliamentary control over expenditures.

As I mentioned, before I get to the serious part of what I want to say or what I hope is a constructive suggestion, I wish to comment on one or two things that were said. Hon. members will not be surprised if I say I was wondering this afternoon, when the hon. member for Peace River on behalf of his party was complaining about excessive and extravagant expenditures of public money, where he and most of his friends were during the last few weeks when bills were being put through the House to increase salaries of members of parliament, senators, cabinet ministers, judges, lieutenant-governors and so on. If we are to preach restraint and speak against extravagance I believe the place to begin is right here.

Another comment I should like to make is in response to the remarks of the President of the Treasury Board. He referred to his efforts this afternoon as another practice session. I can assure him that he is becoming well practised in dealing with motions of this kind. It is always a delight to listen to him. I must say, however, that when he makes the assertion that the government is not exercising too much power, that is really all it is, just an assertion. When he stands up and says, "But we won the election", I tell him that has been the excuse of every government majority I have seen in this House of Commons.

It is perfectly true that the Liberal Party came out of the election in 1974 with an overwhelming majority. The President of the Treasury Board thinks that the people of Canada really wanted it that way. Maybe they did on July 8, 1974, but I suggest that the people of Canada have been thinking it over a good deal since then. I suggest they realize that governments which have overwhelming majorities sooner or later become arrogant. The trouble with this government is it is not later, it is sooner.

The appearance of having all the power and therefore being free to put off decisions about major issues is something that is annoying the people of Canada, and is expressing itself on the part of the people in the feeling