

Motion Respecting House Vote

aware of it so far, and I am speaking for a large number of Liberals who were absent that Monday evening because they had legitimate reasons for being absent; and there is no reason for belabouring them for not being here.

On the front page of the *Toronto Star* last night there appeared a five-column picture taken outside the door of the House of Commons and there was a quotation underneath it: "Our Government Blundered".

● (9:00 p.m.)

What blunder was there on the part of the people who were paired and who were not here? What blunder was there on the part of those Liberals who were snowbound in that bus outside Charlottetown? Private Liberal members are not considered members of the government. Was there any blunder on the part of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) who had been sent to New Delhi, and who went there with the cabinet's full consent? I would like to see less of this open handed blaming of private Liberal members who were going where they should be going and standing where they should be standing, and not criticism from people a thousand miles from here at a time when their presence was vital, very vital to this vote.

We were even told by the Prime Minister that here we were all chastising ourselves. I do not know a Liberal member who had a legitimate excuse for not voting that night who was chastising himself. If this motion will carry, it will establish precedents for the future, as brought out by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) when he was speaking the other day. He said that if this motion should carry it will not be necessary for the cabinet to win votes in future. They can simply wave their hands and say, "Today won't count. We will have another vote on Monday that will really count." We won't even need to ring the division bells. This proposed vote if carried will set a precedent that will have to be eliminated by adopting the United States congressional system where people are free to vote during a four year period.

I am faced with this problem of the two pronged vote. I said I could never support a two pronged resolution. I will follow the Speaker and I will follow him to the end. As I say, they have removed one of the two teeth, and now we are to have a single vote. It was interesting to me, before the majority was manufactured, to note that this motion

does not express confidence. It is worded so as to read:

This house does not regard its vote on February 19th in connection with third reading of Bill C-193, which had carried in all previous stages, as a vote of non-confidence in the government.

It is quite interesting that the cabinet does not ask for a confidence vote. They say that this is not regarded as a vote of non-confidence in the government. The fact that they have brought this motion forward proves that that vote on Monday night of last week was a vote of confidence. Otherwise why was this motion brought forward?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cowan: If this was not a non-confidence vote the cabinet could have proceeded to bring in supplementary estimates which must be passed very shortly, or could have proceeded on interim supply which we are also going to need very shortly. But rather than bring in two such subjects as that, since the cabinet had not been defeated on a confidence motion—according to the talk we have been hearing—it would not have been necessary to bring in this motion. The fact that it has been brought in shows that the vote on third reading was a confidence vote, and the opposition is to be congratulated for having been on its toes at the time of third reading.

I am faced with the problem of going back on my statement that if one half of the proposed resolution was eliminated I would support the other half. I do not want to place myself in that position, but I come to this open situation. I entered this house in 1962. In November and December of 1962 and in January 1963—I have looked up all the *Hansard* records on it—the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) led the assault on the government of the day with regard to those pieces of legislation that had been introduced under order in council by that government.

I have in my hands a copy of *Hansard* for December 20, 1962. At page 2884 it is recorded:

The house resumed from Thursday, December 6—

And I may say this went back to November 22 and November 8

—consideration of the motion of Mr. Martin (Essex East)—

who was seeking to have correspondence tabled:

—on the subject of surcharge and imports order, P.C. 1962-902, dated June 24, 1962, and the amendment to the surcharge and imports order, P.C.