

Motion Respecting House Vote

even the luxury of deciding whether or not it was a vote of confidence. The only reason that parliament is sitting here today is that you, sir, have allowed a motion to be put on the order paper.

As I stated before, the Prime Minister has only one more move to make and that is to go to the Governor General. The government is out, however long it takes them to go through the formal steps of resignation. It is finished. Just to drive home the point that the Prime Minister and his cabinet have no freedom of choice in deciding and are bound to get out, let me quote from one more textbook, "How Are We Governed?", written by Professor John T. Saywell of York University and Professor John C. Ricker of the University of Toronto. We find the following statement on page 53:

These ministers, or the cabinet as they are collectively called, are in turn responsible to the House of Commons and can hold office as advisers to the crown only as long as they are supported by the elected house.

If they are defeated in an election or in the House of Commons, they must resign.

Again, we find the following statement on page 68:

The house can indicate its displeasure by defeating a government measure or simply by passing a motion of lack of confidence in the ministry. In such cases, the Prime Minister has no alternative but to hand in his resignation to the Governor General or ask for dissolution.

In the light of this great breadth of authoritative opinion I cannot accept that this government has the right, after Monday evening, February 19, to bring in any business whatsoever or even to pretend to office. Their course is clear and they have no legal or constitutional choice but to resign or dissolve.

In the past few days one government apologist after another has come forward to plead that what happened on the floor of the house on Monday evening was all a terrible mistake, an unfortunate accident, a minor setback, an unimportant snag that had no real constitutional implications and carried with it no compulsion upon the government to act. What happened on that eventful evening? What are the facts as recorded in *Hansard*? The bare fact is that the government was defeated on a major money bill by the combined efforts of all opposition parties.

I heard the Prime Minister on television on Tuesday evening trying to explain the comparative unimportance of that vote, and I will

[Mr. McIntosh.]

not go now into the question of the accommodation accorded by our leader to the Prime Minister on his speedy return from Jamaica. This is another story which should be told at great length. The Prime Minister said on Tuesday that the bill had been passed through all stages up to third reading before being narrowly defeated on the final vote. His main point was that this was a freak accident which never should have happened but now that it had things could be set right again by the simple expedient of revoting.

Again I draw to your attention, sir, the wording of that motion which you allowed to be placed on the order paper contrary to rule 35. The Prime Minister felt that the issue was a minor one, that the question of confidence in the government was not really involved, or if it was involved it was not fairly tested and, after all, why should we go to the bother of an election over a trifle such as a vote against the government? Let us consider the amount of money which such an election would cost the country. I have heard figures from \$13 million to \$30 million mentioned. Very few people in Canada today know the amount of money that the government is spending needlessly every hour, which could be spent on another election. I say it is our duty as members of the House of Commons to stop this unnecessary expenditure of money.

If the Prime Minister and his fellow apologists for the government really believe what they are saying and are not simply indulging in cynical manipulations of facts in order to enjoy the fruits of office, then they show an ignorance of the underlying and basic theory of parliamentary government, namely, that a government can continue to govern only as long as it retains the confidence of the people who gave it the power to govern in the first place. As I said before, the people are represented by members elected to the House of Commons. When a majority of these members vote against the government it seems obvious that confidence in the government has been lost. I believe that the ordinary man on the street believes in this principle, Mr. Speaker. This simple fact should be obvious even to the many members on the government side whose sympathies are with another system of government. However, I will not go into that at the moment.

● (3:40 p.m.)

Leaving aside for the moment the question of confidence in the government, the bare and inescapable fact remains that one of the principal measures of the government's legislative