

Motion Respecting House Vote

incompetence on Monday night probably the Prime Minister did not trust them to draft a motion. In that I heartily concur.

The Prime Minister, I think properly, did not consult me about the matter, but I think he had a right to have 24 hours in which to think the matter over. But if he was entitled to 24 hours to think the matter over, surely the opposition parties were entitled to some time to study a motion which, if hon. members will take the time to look at it, is not a straight confidence motion but a very tricky motion. Now that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) has elevated the word "trickery" to the status of a parliamentary term which is not slanderous, I want to say that this motion is a piece of trickery.

I can tell the house that the members of the New Democratic party agreed in caucus last Wednesday that if the Prime Minister introduced on Wednesday afternoon a straight vote of confidence we would be prepared to waive the 48 hours notice and proceed with the debate. But instead we got a motion which asked us to repudiate the decision we made on Monday night. It asked us to lie in our teeth and say that when we voted no confidence in the government we did not mean we were voting no confidence. It asked us to say we did not know what we were doing. It was the government that did not know what they were doing.

However, we sense a much more sinister implication in this motion. I have good reason to believe that originally the government intended to bring in a double-barrelled motion which would not only ask for confidence but would put Bill No. C-193 back on the order paper. I am convinced still that the motion now before us was intended to be the first step to bring that about and that if the government had not been caught out on it the motion now before the house, if it had been passed on Wednesday, would have been followed by a motion to put the tax bill back on the order paper, which is contrary to our practice and our rules. The government would be fooling no one if they said now, we will not reintroduce the bill, because they have been caught with their hands in the cookie jar. They were hoping that on Wednesday they would slip this motion through and then today they would introduce another motion to put Bill No. C-193 back on the order paper.

Mr. Woolliams: They might try it yet.

An hon. Member: Their hand is in the till.

Mr. Douglas: Their tail is in the gate. You can describe it any way you like. The fact is that they are in a bad situation.

Not only do we have this very tricky motion before us—it is because this motion was tricky that we insisted on sufficient time to study it and we make no apology for that—but it is important now that we deal with this motion of confidence quickly and expeditiously. So far as the members of this party are concerned we can see no reason for a protracted debate. We are prepared to debate it and to take a vote on it today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Douglas: If the government is sustained in the motion of confidence we can get on with the business of the country. If the government is defeated we should go to the electorate as quickly as possible. But we see no reason for a protracted debate. We make no apology for asking for time to look into what is not a simple motion of confidence but a very sly attempt to circumvent the expressed wish of parliament by putting back on the order paper a piece of legislation which the members of this house have defeated.

In addition to what has been happening inside the house, a great deal has been happening outside. As a matter of fact, the government has been carrying on most of the debate on television because I have come to the conclusion that the government is under the impression that it governs by divine rule and the news service of the C.B.C. There are times when it is very difficult to distinguish between the two. The Prime Minister goes on television and says that there is an organized plot, a manufactured crisis, that there is trickery in this situation.

● (12:30 p.m.)

Mr. Churchill: Shameful.

Mr. Douglas: He comes before the house today, however, and assures us that there was no collusion. The difference is that today he is going to have some speakers following him. I invite the Prime Minister or anyone on that side of the house to indicate that there was trickery or any manufactured crisis or any organized plot on this side of the house with reference to the vote last Monday night. What the government has tried to do has been to cry foul to cover up its own ineptitude and incompetence. The government has botched the handling of this bill from the