

Motion Respecting House Vote

then there will be an election. It seems to me that this important question should not be decided by what one or the other side of the house says is its interpretation of the vote which took place here last Monday. This is why I say, supported by better constitutional authorities than the Canada Year Book, that the Prime Minister is fulfilling his duty when he brings such a motion before the house to give the house an opportunity to state its view unequivocally, and I say it will be the responsibility of the house in every quarter and through each of its members to decide what shall be done.

As I look back over the events of this week I have the impression of a kind of high fantasy. It started on Monday night, but I will not detail the things which happened then.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): It's too painful.

Mr. Stewart: It is on the record, and anyone who reads can refer to the record.

Mr. Hales: You would like to change the record if you could.

Mr. Woolliams: He is trying to change the record now.

Mr. Hales: Would the hon. member permit a question? Does he recall the situation on Monday night? After the vote was taken, the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Benson) rose to bring in further business. We said, no, we would not do any further business. The house then took a vote, which was a vote of confidence, on a motion by the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) which resulted in 79 to 78 votes against the government. That was a vote of non-confidence.

Mr. Stewart: The hon. gentleman is entirely free to develop any argument that he wishes in his own time. I certainly do not dispute that he can use the record to support his argument. I would hesitate to do so because there are certain other things which appear on the record such as, for example, the suggestion that there was no unanimous consent. As I said, we get the impression of high fantasy.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): You are reflecting on Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Stewart: Then, after Monday, we find that the opposition takes the view that the government should be thrown out, and yet from day to day it delays the final test which

[Mr. Stewart.]

could have the effect which it so ardently desires.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order, which again arises from the remarks made by the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough who keeps insisting on describing what the opposition did from day to day. Let me pound it into his head, and let it be understood clearly, that it was the Prime Minister who requested a 24 hour recess.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I should be allowed to suggest that this is not really a point of order, but more a point of debate, and the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough should be allowed to continue his speech.

Mr. Stewart: I am very anxious that the hon. member for Cape Breton South be at ease. Let me say to reassure him, that there is no doubt in my mind, or that of any hon. member, that it was agreed we should not proceed on Tuesday, and that it was gracious of the Leader of the Opposition not to wish to go on with the regular business on Tuesday.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): You are twisting it. It was the Prime Minister's wish.

An hon. Member: What about Wednesday and Thursday?

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): You keep getting into trouble.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): You always put your foot in your mouth. Be more careful.

Mr. Speaker: May we have improved order, please.

Mr. Stewart: I have the greatest sympathy for the hon. member for Cape Breton South and also for his leader.

• (4:40 p.m.)

An hon. Member: You are going to need it.

Mr. Stewart: I think, sir, the time has come when the House of Commons should focus its attention upon the nation's business. I do not dispute that there is room for argument as to the interpretation of the vote last Monday. I think it is well that we should have this argument and settle the matter conclusively. However, we should not have, as the Leader of the Opposition has suggested, an election precipitated in this country because of what certain hon. members think is the effect of the vote recorded last Monday.