

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

**Mr. Pearson:** Dr. Forsey had something to say about this. He said:

In a House of Commons where no party has a clear majority while the "loose fish" may be practically extinct—

And they are, of course.

—his place may be taken by loose shoals of fish, shaky groups of fellows...which cannot be depended on by any government.

Those are Dr. Forsey's words. Of course there are groups that cannot be depended upon by any government because they are independent groups, and the government has no right to depend on them. It has a hope that it can depend on their intelligent understanding and good sense. That is all it has the right to hope for. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre's exhaustive analysis of Canadian precedents right down the years led him to the firm and unshakable conclusion—

• (11:30 a.m.)

**An hon. Member:** Which you rejected.

**Mr. Pearson:** —and I hope it remains, the firm and unshakable conclusion—

**An hon. Member:** Which you rejected.

**Mr. Pearson:** —that in cases where a government measure were defeated or amended in parliament—and I quote from page 132—

Then...it is up to the government to decide whether it wants to go to the country...or whether it wants to come and ask parliament whether we should stay here and do our job.

The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) took exactly the same stand, and indeed the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Aiken) had some wise observations to make in that debate along exactly the same lines.

**Mr. Aiken:** May I ask the Prime Minister a question?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka.

**Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka):** I believe the Prime Minister refers to some points having to do with a proposal I made for changes in the constitution. Since those proposals have not been accepted, is he not proving himself wrong under our present constitutional practice?

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, I was not referring to that; I was referring to some general observations. I wish I had the hon. member's

remarks at my finger tips; I could get them in a few moments. I am referring to remarks in which the hon. member said that the defeat of a government need not, on certain occasions, require dissolution or resignation.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, would the Prime Minister permit a question? Since the Prime Minister is quoting with approval the position I took on January 21, 1966, will he indicate what his attitude was on that occasion toward the stand I took?

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Pearson:** I will indeed, Mr. Speaker. I took the attitude and our government took the attitude that in an important matter of this kind, since increasing pensions by \$25 was against government policy at that time, if that measure were carried it would be a vote of no confidence in the government and we would resign.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Pearson:** And, Mr. Speaker, that decision was made clear in advance.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Knowles:** Would the Prime Minister permit a further question? Is it a case, then, that he agrees with me only when he is in a corner and needs to get out of it?

**Mr. Pearson:** I only agree with my hon. friend when he is right.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Pearson:** He knows what great respect I have for his knowledge and judgment in these constitutional and procedural matters.

Getting back to the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam, on page 75 in this debate on January 20, 1966, he also emphasized the importance of "expression of opinion from the house on vital and essential questions." He said the New Democratic party did not believe that an expression of opinion contained in an amendment to the address in reply to the speech from the throne or an amendment to the budget or a supply motion, even one that defeated the government, necessarily or inherently constituted a motion of no confidence. Then he went on to say:

—if any amendment which merely seeks to get an expression of opinion from the house as a whole were passed, the government—