

Motion Respecting House Vote

I say to you, sir, we do not have to plunge into an election. The Prime Minister of this country could adopt his role of diplomat. He could talk to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield). These two men are officers of this House of Commons. In their custody, along with that of Mr. Speaker, rests the traditions and customs of this institution. Why cannot some compromise be worked out? I would not care if we were establishing another precedent. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre would be able to get that straightened out for us, and I speak these words kindly.

I would not mind if Prime Minister Pearson continued in office for the next five weeks. After all, he has had 50 years of service to his country. I would say to him, drop the motion and save parliament, save our freedom. In return, we will stop the debate. We will let you carry on for the next five weeks. We will finish up the essential business, supplementary estimates and interim supply certainly by the middle of March. Then, we could prorogue or adjourn, have the Liberal convention, select a new leader and the Prime Minister could retire with honour. Then, let the new leader come back here, open the house, perhaps bring in a budget to correct the financial and economic conditions of this country. I appeal to the Prime Minister. I appeal to the Liberal party. The Liberal party has a long and honourable history. What party fought for responsible government, for free speech, for representation by population—the Liberal party. This is the party that represented freedom in the nineteenth century. It was not a party of expediency and a party of power, as it is now. I appeal to the Liberal party to do for this parliament and for this country what their forefathers did for Canada in the nineteenth century. That is the issue as I see it. I say this can be done, and it can be done by negotiation without the country being forced into a vote, or saddling us with a precedent which will sap the vitality of this institution. That, sir, is the case as I see it.

● (9:50 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska): Mr. Speaker, circumstances have made it necessary to postpone the business of the house for a few days due to application of rules and procedures which should be amended. The Canadian people want more than sterile debates between politicians who seem to seek the best opportunity to consolidate the

[Mr. Churchill.]

future of their party instead of the country's. It is to be hoped, at least, that the precedent which will undoubtedly be created will have satisfactory results in the orientation of the procedural changes which are necessary.

We are now witnessing a debate brought about by a lack of observation on the part of the Liberal team, which does not seem to realize that the Canadian citizens are already burdened by various taxes which lead the wiliest of them to use various means to get around the existing regulations.

The present circumstances allow me to add that the corrupt financial system tolerated by our politicians and to which they adapt themselves has greatly contributed to incite citizens to find means of avoiding, as much as they can, the heavy taxes overburdening them.

Our tax-happy politicians are largely responsible for this state of affairs as far as a sense of responsibility, honesty and integrity in relationship among individuals is concerned. The taxing system contributed—I repeat—to bring citizens to use their imagination in order to find means of keeping their earnings, either by falsifying their income tax return, or by devising various statements which, in their opinion, could somewhat lessen the pressure brought to bear by tax-happy people of all kinds.

Everywhere one feels the pressure exerted by those who seem to take particular care to protect the system which established this way of thinking according to which taxation exists since the world was created, and the partisans of this group are already inclined to believe they are immortal. That probably explains in part the absence of a great many members in the house on February 19, 1968, and the provocative attitude of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), docile follower of the system, who seemed anxious to register his vote in favour of the clique of financiers who force him to empty the pockets of the Canadian people by all sorts of tricks, in order to maintain his reputation as a great treasurer. Unfortunately for him and for the big-wigs of finance, on the evening of February 19, it happened that the majority of the representatives of the people present in the house thought of the workers and the taxpayers, who are generally not too well off and who can no longer stand these constant drains on their pockets. This is what brought about a vote against the passing of Bill No. C-193.

This is a triumph over the dictatorship of high finance, which too often has had the