

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

meaning of the vote last Monday night. From the start, I said, and I repeat it, that when we voted on Bill No. C-193, we defeated that bill and nothing else. We did not vote on a motion of confidence in the government, but on Bill No. C-193.

Because this bill was intended to increase taxes, we are told that it becomes a vote of confidence or non-confidence. Mr. Speaker, if one consults the standing orders of the house, one realizes that there is nothing, absolutely nothing in the standing orders which stipulates that voting against a bill constitutes a defeat for the government.

The Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) referred to the constitutional right. He said that, constitutionally, after having been defeated on a money bill, the government should resign.

I am now holding the constitution of Canada. I shall send it through a messenger to the one who represents the Leader of the Opposition. I challenge anyone to find in that constitution a section, a line, a paragraph—the member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) is sitting besides the Leader of the Opposition, he can check—that stipulates that the government is overthrown when a bill is defeated.

I am sorry, I sent the French copy. It is a supreme insult.

**Mr. Lewis:** It is an accident?

**Mr. Grégoire:** It is only by accident. It is the copy which I looked at.

I challenge the hon. member for Ontario to find anything in the constitution which says that a government, which is defeated on any bill must resign.

In fact, the provisional reprint of the standing orders of the house dated May 8, 1967—it is all very well to remind us what happened in 1868, 1887, 1920 or 1930, however there is one thing which has priority, and it is the standing orders of the House of Commons—does not specify anything on this subject. However, one standing order relates very closely to the case under consideration at the present time.

Standing order 56, paragraph 4, subparagraph (e), reads:

When a motion "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair" is superseded by the adoption of an amendment at any time before the expiry of either the said two days or the time carried forward from a former debate, as the case may be, a like motion may be forthwith made by a minister of the crown.

Which means that if a supply motion is put forward and defeated, the government is not

necessarily defeated. It says that a minister may rise forthwith to move a like motion, that is to move once more that Mr. Speaker do leave the chair.

Under that standing order, if it is a financial matter, if the Speaker is requested to leave the chair for the house to meet in committee of the whole and to discuss supply, and if the proposal is not accepted by the whole house, it is superseded by an amendment duly voted on. Then, it is not necessarily a want of confidence vote, but a minister—and it is specified a minister of the crown—may make forthwith a like motion and then, it becomes a matter of confidence.

● (5:20 p.m.)

That is exactly what happens at the present time and nothing further is provided in our standing orders.

Mr. Speaker, for a much deeper reason, I think that it is intentionally that our standing orders do not provide anything more specific and that there is no mention thereof in the constitution. In fact, if we accept the principle by which, when a government bill is defeated, the government itself is defeated and a new election must take place, all members are forced to let their party's interests come before those of their electors. If, for a Liberal member, the fact that he votes against a bill, means that he votes against his party, then he has to choose between his party or his electors, and an hon. member should not be placed in a position where he would have to put a political party before his electors.

He is elected first by his constituents; if he belongs to a party, it is accidental but that is not the main reason why he was elected. He was elected first of all by his constituents and that case should be used to establish a very clear precedent, namely that each time a bill is introduced by the government, even a member of the party in office, that is, in the circumstances, a Liberal member, can vote against it without that being taken as a vote against the government. In my opinion, we have now striking evidence that the Liberal members, who are in office, can vote against a bill introduced by the government if they feel that it does not please their electors or if it goes against their conscience without running the risk of defeating the government or forcing an election.

Before what happened this week, no member of the party in office could be assured of that, but with the motion of the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), all Liberal members now