

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

submitted by hon. gentlemen in the Social Credit party which spelled out—if it had not been a brief amendment and subamendment I would say, in chapter and verse—non-confidence in the then government. Second, as has been suggested, the motion that was defeated here last Monday was preceded by the successful passage of earlier motions.

I think it would be very unfortunate if anyone thought there was any suggestion that all these motions were carried unanimously. These were decisions of the house, just as the decision on the motion for third reading was a decision of the house. There is no suggestion that all hon. members on this or on the other side unanimously acclaimed each of the several clauses, or indeed the bill at the resolution or the second reading stage. But it is true that just as the motion for the third reading of the bill was defeated by the house, so the motions for the earlier stages of the bill were carried by the house.

• (4:30 p.m.)

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order arising from what the hon. member has just said about the earlier motion being carried in committee. I would draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that following the vote a question of privilege was raised regarding the fact that some Liberal members had walked in from behind the curtain and had thus abused the voting procedure of the house.

**Mr. Stewart:** The third point I want to submit brings our attention to the attendance and to the mood of the house on that occasion. I think we have only to read the record to see that there were elements of comedy and tragedy about it which we need not now review. It is all these differences which make it impossible and improper to draw a parallel between the vote last Monday and the vote which took place on Tuesday, February 5, 1963. I am suggesting that the genuine parallel is between the vote taken in 1963 and the vote which will take place on the motion now before us.

There is another point which I want to make. It is that the Conservatives have adopted a really untenable position. They say that the house has no confidence in the government. This is a perfectly reasonable position for them to take, in view of their interpretation of the vote. They insist, however, that in their view there should not be another opportunity for the genuine attitude of the

house to be tested. So one is driven by inexorable logic to the conclusion that they think that either their reading of the vote last Monday was incorrect or that since that day there has been a change in attitude of the house toward the government.

They cannot have it both ways. If they believe, as they say, that this government has lost the confidence of the house, then I should have thought that it was incumbent upon them to take whatever steps were necessary to bring about the expulsion of this government immediately on Tuesday. Let me correct that, sir and say, on Wednesday or Thursday.

**Mr. Crouse:** It is we who accommodated you. Get your facts straight.

**Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria):** The Prime Minister begged for 24 hours.

**Mr. Stewart:** Presumably also they would want to expedite the vote today. If on February 19 the opposition had defeated the government and if the government had not then taken cognizance of this vote in the house and had insisted on going on with business, the opposition would have found a remedy. The remedy they would have found would have been a vote of non-confidence or vote of censure. This is what they would have done.

But, the Prime Minister has brought in a motion, and consequently they will have nothing to do with it. They are not happy because the proposal to test the confidence of the house comes from this side rather than from their own side. If this were their remedy, they would rejoice in it. On the other hand, because it comes from this side of the house they boggle and buck.

The people of Canada do not want an election at this time.

**Mr. Crouse:** That is what you say.

**Mr. Stewart:** I am submitting this as an argument. I believe that the Prime Minister should not inflict an election upon the people of this country at this time, in view of the uncertain nature of that vote. Consequently I say that it is the duty of the Prime Minister, not just his right, to test the attitude of the house. I am sure that the house will speak with an unequivocal voice.

If the house is prepared to let the government continue, then the government will continue and there will be no immediate election. On the other hand, if the house decides it is not prepared to let the government carry on,