

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

Dr. Beauchesne agrees with this. All the authorities I have been able to consult agree, whether it concerns third reading or some other stage, that the government can avail itself of its undoubted right to judge what is or what is not a matter of confidence.

Perhaps the greatest authority on parliamentary procedure in the English speaking world, Professor Berriedale Keith, in his book "The British Cabinet System"—and we follow in these matters the principles and practices of Westminster, writes:

It rests, therefore, with the government to decide what issues it shall treat as vital, and as demanding that it must resign or dissolve if it is denied support thereon.

He adds that a sudden upset of the government without warning is not equivalent to a vote of confidence, particularly when the government is in a minority position. Other authorities confirm this view, and I am thinking of Carter and Jennings as well as Dr. Eugene Forsey, a recognized Canadian authority on these matters. They all agree that when a government is a minority government it is likely that it may suffer defeats without resignation which might lead to the fall of a majority government.

Dr. Forsey, Mr. Speaker, made some interesting observations on this matter in an article in the *Journal of Political Science and Economics* in 1964, concerning the problems of minority government in Canada. I quote from his article:

There are certain habits of thought or feeling which we will have to change.

The first is that any government defeat in the House of Commons necessarily means either the government's resignation or a fresh election. This is not so. Of course, defeat on a motion of censure, or want of confidence—

We have one before us now.

—or on any measure which the government considers vital to its policy is decisive and any government is free to consider even a very minor defeat decisive. But the history of British governments in the XIXth century is studded with defeats which the government simply accepted.

Dr. Forsey concludes:

We shall certainly have to get rid of the notion that every defeat in the house means a fresh election.

I come now, Mr. Speaker, to our own house and the constitutional authorities; and we do have some in our own House of Commons. I am being very sincere when I say that that great constitutional and parliamentary authority, the hon. member for Winnipeg North

[Mr. Pearson.]

Centre (Mr. Knowles), agrees entirely with Dr. Forsey and the other authorities I have quoted, and I am glad to call him to witness. In his remarks to be found in *Hansard* on January 21, 1966 at page 129 the hon. member developed at some length a position which he thought would permit members of the House of Commons to support amendments to the speech from the throne calling for old age security to be increased to \$100 a month and old age security to be payable from age 65, both of which at that time were not government policies but were very important changes. The hon. member contended that these steps should be taken by the House of Commons without at the same time, in voting for them, expressing any lack of confidence in the government and thereby forcing an election, even though the government were opposed to the amendments. The hon. member outlined his position as follows, Mr. Speaker:

We intend...to vote...for the amendment that calls for old age security to be raised... In casting these votes, Mr. Speaker, we are not voting for an election. We are not saying that dissolution must necessarily follow. We are voting for what the words say—

And later:

If anyone wants to bring before parliament at any time the issue of an election, the issue of dissolution, and if it stands by itself—

And it is standing by itself today, Mr. Speaker.

—we will take our stand on this issue.

The hon. member marshalled very impressive evidence to support that position. His studies in Canadian parliamentary history led him to conclude that Canadian governments had, and I quote, "received adverse votes dozens, perhaps scores of times" without resigning. He went back to Sir John A. Macdonald, and that is really going back to the father of our country. Nine times in four years his government was defeated without resignation. Indeed, in 1869 they were defeated on a money bill and Sir John, while carrying on, is reported to have been enraged by the result. I can understand how he felt, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Mr. Pearson:** Sir John explained his defeat in this year as due to the fact that he had, according to his own words, too many "loose fish, shaky fellows" on his side.

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