

The Constitution

Some hon. Members: Not true.

Mr. Collette: We know the position in which the official opposition has found itself in this debate. They have no position. In fact the last three weeks has been one exercise of obstruction on behalf of the official opposition in this House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Collette: They have the audacity to come here with a supply motion on their allotted day and ask us to consider a complicated matter contained in the resolution, that is, patriation with the Vancouver formula. They want discussions and a judgment of this House within three hours this afternoon, yet they plead, they writhe for time to discuss motion No. 18 in committee. They want the committee extended, they want the reporting of the committee and the other debate extended. What it really amounts to is one rule for the Tories, and one rule for the rest. That is what we have before us this afternoon, an exceedingly mischievous motion.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): What a distortion.

Mr. Collette: I can see the fine hands of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) and the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) in the drafting of this motion. It is mischief, or perhaps it is a clear misunderstanding of the rules. Under Standing Order 58(9), the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton and his colleagues know full well that this is a matter of confidence. If the members on this side of the House were disposed to agree with that motion, and if we voted with the official opposition—

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): We would have a new constitution.

Mr. Collette:—we would not have a government.

An hon. Member: We have not got one now.

Mr. Collette: This is a matter of confidence and they know it. The subject matter of the motion does not matter, it does not matter how laudable it is.

Mr. Clark: Ask Lester Pearson.

Mr. Collette: There may be laudable points in the arguments brought out as a result of this motion, but we are imprisoned with the Standing Orders of this House.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Collette: If we voted with the opposition, there would not be a government; there would be an election.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I lower my eyes.

Mr. Collette: I put that down to a clear misunderstanding of the rules because, if it is not, it is absolute, pure, unmitigated mischief.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Smile, David.

Mr. Collette: Given what has happened in the last three weeks, we could probably say to the official opposition—I see the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton making rude faces.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): I am laughing.

Mr. Collette: It does not behoove him well, a man of his stature as the House leader of the official opposition to be making smirks and deriding the business of this House. Shame on him for that.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The hon. member can indulge in all the unparliamentary language he wishes, but I was not making rude faces, unless my friend considers a smile of derision at his fatuous argument a rude face.

● (1650)

Mr. Collette: Mr. Speaker, I need not comment on the supercilious intervention of the hon. member for Nepean-Carleton. Obviously the strength of our arguments are getting to that side and I think that the strength of our case, as it has been presented in the last few weeks, has obviously been unsettling to them. That is why the opposition leader sits in his place wriggling, writhing and red-faced, heckling the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) and the hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent). He knows he is in an impossible position.

Another reason why this very motion is mischievous—

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Mischievous!

Mr. Collette: However you pronounce it in Victoria or Esquimalt-Saanich—I am quite flexible on my English pronunciation.

But, Mr. Speaker, if the government votes with the official opposition on this motion, as I stated, the government ceases to exist, Parliament is dissolved, and there is an election. If we vote against their motion this afternoon, as we will, I do not think hon. members opposite realize what will happen. It precludes the special joint committee from dealing with the substance of this argument at a later date. And so I question their sincerity, I question their motives. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) went on about the so-called Vancouver consensus. He is bluffing, because if he were really serious he would not bring this motion before us this afternoon, the very vote against which will preclude comment on it or even acceptance of that later in the debate. I say that the arguments of the Leader of the Opposition, if not mischievous are dishonest—and I say the arguments are dishonest—and he is playing games with this House. It is a pure example of Tory trickery.

Mr. Baker (Nepean-Carleton): You're splitting hairs.

Mr. Collette: Mr. Speaker, the last three weeks have been marked by very passionate and intellectual debate from all sides. There have been some outstanding interventions—and I have been in the House most of the time—from all sides.

Mr. Paproski: Now you cut them off.