

Motion Respecting House Vote

Then, speaking of the motion, he went on to say:

It does not ask the house to rescind or reconsider any vote.

I now wish to refer to standing order 25 of this house which says that no member may reflect upon any vote of the house, except for the purpose of moving that such vote be rescinded.

You will notice that on page 6923 the Prime Minister says:

It does not ask the house to rescind or reconsider any vote.

Later he goes on to say:

We have made it quite clear we are not going to ask for further progress on that bill—

In this manner the cabinet had put only one tooth in the motion; they had cleaned it up in the sense that I was told, previously, that it was going to have two teeth. One of them having been removed, according to the very learned decision of the Speaker, the motion now covers only one point.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I want you to consider the remark that there was only a small house which voted 84 to 82; and therefore it was a small technical mistake—it was a fluke, we are told. Well, look at the capital punishment bill. We retained capital punishment in this house by 143 to 112, with 255 members voting. And what happened? Fourteen months later the cabinet brought the same measure back on the floor of the House of Commons. If a vote of 255 members will not hold them, what will?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Cowan: The bill was revived and put through by a vote of 114 to 87. Previously it was defeated, 143 to 112 but now it was put through 114 to 87. As I said at the time, what 112 members could not do in one month 114 did 14 months later, when the question was revived as a government bill, and being told that there was to be a free vote. I had never heard such a bastard phrase before.

• (8:50 p.m.)

I say it is time some of the rules of this house were changed so that free votes could be called much more frequently without the expectation of an election every time a cabinet measure may be defeated. I want to point out that we have been advised that this was decided by a very small vote, 82 to 84, and it was a Monday, too; normally they would not

have a vote on a Monday, so this was trickery, underhand work or something. Mr. Speaker, on February 7 I introduced an amendment on third reading. We are told, now, that a vote on third reading is only a technical matter and that defeat does not count. Yet against the amendment I brought in simply to ask the house to revert to committee of the whole to reconsider clause 28 of the broadcasting bill, the Liberal party lined up 107 votes to ensure that my proposal should not carry.

If third reading does not matter, why go to the trouble of lining up 107 votes? Third reading is only technical, after all, and if the amendment carried what harm would be done? It seems to be a case of heads you win and tails I lose, and the people who follow the rules of the house do not seem able to get the verdict which their foresight should make available to them.

On this question of the income tax bill: One of the speakers in this debate made reference to a gentleman by the name of Jennings, I think, who wrote a book entitled "Cabinet Government". Well, I do not like to hear citations from books entitled "Cabinet Government". We are having too much cabinet government as it is. I would like to see more parliamentary government and less cabinet government, and I do not like quotations from that book.

I mentioned a moment ago that I wished to refer to a personal matter. I have kept very quiet since that vote a week ago Monday. I have always been here, never absent. But I picked up the Toronto *Globe and Mail* of Thursday last and read a story there under the headline: "Crisis deepens as parties reveal strategies". On page 8, I came across these interesting words. Mr. Pearson had called what was described as a formal press conference—I don't know whether anyone attended in tails and bow ties, or what.

Mr. Pearson noted that Mr. Stanfield had suggested that the Prime Minister might turn the government over to another Liberal.

I thank the hon. gentleman for that suggestion.

He said he would have to ask Mr. Stanfield whom he had in mind, adding that any member of the government would make a good prime minister.

The report continues:

"Even Liberal M.P. Ralph Cowan (York-Humber)?" a reporter asked.

"He's not a member of the government," Mr. Pearson shot back.