

Motion Respecting House Vote

was his decision, when he was going to resign. It was the government's decision as to when the house was going to sit and what business would be put before it, and it is our duty to deal as sincerely and as honestly as we can with the business that comes before the house. Yet when a government measure of this sort is defeated the Prime Minister suggests there is something underhanded and that somehow we have taken advantage of the Liberal party.

• (12:10 p.m.)

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Stanfield: I am going to get off this subject, Mr. Speaker, because I do not enjoy it particularly.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stanfield: But I must say I was a little upset when the Prime Minister attempted to give the impression in the house yesterday that he had not said there was trickery involved in the proceedings on Monday night, when he tried to give the impression that he had only quoted somebody else who had suggested that there might be trickery involved. I must say I was a little upset that the Prime Minister of this country would tend to slough off such a matter in this way.

Why has the Prime Minister flung charges so wildly since the defeat on Monday night? Why has he attacked the opposition in such a way—I do not know whether “vicious” is too strong a word; certainly he is not a vicious man.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stanfield: I think he must be seriously disturbed by the serious condition into which his government has brought the country, and no doubt he was humiliated by the defeat suffered by the government on Monday night. I think that above all he has been very much aware of the weakness of his case and because of this has tried to distract the Canadian people. To my mind it is a little pathetic.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I could go on, Mr. Speaker, and enlarge to the house on why we believe this government does not deserve a vote of confidence quite apart from the issue on Monday night. There is a question of economic mismanagement, the slow rate of economic growth, the attempt to increase taxes, the increasing rate of unemployment and the

mounting degree of inflation. Quite apart from anything else, if there was ever a government that deserved a vote of non-confidence surely it is this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: Although the tax measure was defeated, the indications to the Canadian people are that the government is going to continue to collect the tax. It has no legislative authority to do this. It did not have any in the first place. If it was entitled to assume that the bill would pass and collected the tax, certainly the government has no justification at all for its high-handed decision to continue to collect this surcharge, these additional taxes, without any authority at all from the parliament of Canada. There is no need for me to use the usual words in connection with this kind of conduct. It speaks for itself.

I say again, Mr. Speaker, that the introduction of this motion of confidence is contrary to our constitution and a violation of constitutional practice. I say to my hon. friend the Prime Minister that this is the sort of thing that tends to destroy parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: It is an unfortunate precedent and if it passes it will suggest to governments in the future that they can ignore votes in the house on matters of fundamental importance. It would be a most unfortunate precedent if this should take place. If by any chance it does take place I am sure the Canadian people will correct it at the first opportunity.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I also suggest in all sincerity that the motion has been put in as inflammatory a way as it could be. It is not a simple confidence motion, which the Prime Minister first indicated he was going to put before the house. We say, of course, that he had no right to put forward a simple motion of confidence.

Mr. Woolliams: Pickersgillian.

Mr. Stanfield: I really believe that this motion was not drafted in anger. I assume that my hon. friends think through what they are going to do, and I can only assume that the motion is designed to provoke some sort of reaction by the opposition. We respect parliament, Mr. Speaker, even if the government does not seem to do so. We will say what we think is necessary in this debate. We will take the time that we believe to be necessary—we