

should happen to this parliament, will the government consider bringing in legislation at an early date to raise the old age pension to \$75 a month?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I do not know the meaning of those words "in case anything happens to this parliament". We will have a debate today, I presume, on the question of confidence; and as to whether anything happens, the hon. gentleman will make his own contribution.

SUPPLY

Hon. George C. Nowlan (Minister of Finance) moved that the house go into committee of supply.

ALLEGED LACK OF LEADERSHIP, CONFUSION AND INDECISION

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): This motion, Mr. Speaker, once again gives the house an opportunity to move any motion that it desires to move to express its views on the government of the day. In this regard we are once again discharging our historic and traditional duty in the opposition of refusing to grant supply before there is redress. This is the second supply motion to be moved since this parliament met on September 27 last, and in accordance with our rules four more supply motions must be moved.

A few moments ago one hon. member asked a question on the assumption that something may happen to this parliament. Well, we will have a chance to decide tomorrow evening, unless something else happens before then, Mr. Speaker, what should happen to this parliament at this time. But whatever may happen to this parliament, there is no doubt what has happened to this government. It has lost the confidence of this house, and it has lost the confidence of this country. There is no doubt, from statements made by representatives of all opposition parties—no doubt in the world—that this government no longer has the confidence of the majority of the members of this house. All that is now required is for those members and those parties which have expressed their lack of confidence in this government to show that lack of confidence in the decision we will be taking on this motion.

The motion that I propose to move, Mr. Speaker, at the end of my remarks will certainly be a motion of non-confidence, and of non-confidence not merely in respect of any one particular issue but of the way in which this government has conducted the

Alleged Lack of Government Leadership
affairs of the country and the affairs of this parliament since we met last September.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Running away.

Mr. Pearson: If ever a government has lost the confidence of the people, Mr. Speaker, it is this one—and I am glad to see the Prime Minister taking that down.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: No; I was simply pointing out that you are running away from the issue.

Mr. Pearson: No amount of manoeuvring, no sleight of hand, no tricks can obscure this obvious loss of confidence of the house and of the country. No amount of this kind of thing can save the government or divert public opinion, indeed, from the weaknesses of this government. Perhaps the high point—or, if you like, the low point—in this regard was reached last Friday in the somewhat juvenile performances that went on, the theatrical appearances and disappearances, the collection of crowds which then gradually disappeared and re-collected on the basis of contrived and circulated rumours, all to give the impression that this parliament was on the very verge of dissolution.

Mr. Churchill: Your nervousness was very marked.

Mr. Pearson: Certainly whatever may have then been the position of this parliament, whatever brink we may have been on last Friday, there is no doubt that over the weekend the government has been over the brink in so far as dissolution is concerned. I suggest that the situation which faces us in this country, nationally and internationally, is too serious for the kind of party posturing such as we had last Friday. But I suppose we must continue to expect it from the government as a substitute for the kind of action we should be getting. Indeed, it all conforms to the practice of this government, its ingrained and now inevitable tendency to avoid a decision on anything at almost any price, to keep throwing up smokescreens in order to obscure reality, the reality and seriousness of our problems; smokescreens, Mr. Speaker, that will help the government to avoid doing anything today that can be put off for postponement tomorrow. In looking around for particular matters to illustrate and support this charge of indecision, delay and ineffectiveness as a government, one has no trouble finding an abundance of ammunition. I propose to deal, though briefly with some of these matters as I go along.

There is the lack of any long range economic proposals, which I will come to later.