

Motion Respecting House Vote

want it. I am but the servant of my constituency here, so I shall readily comply with the will of the majority.

Speaking of jokers, Mr. Speaker, does anyone sincerely believe that the Conservative party wants an election? Would it not be rather that they want to get some headlines in all newspapers and be on television? Those who listened to their spokesmen and leader last night, must have felt the chill of death when the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Stanfield) claimed that he did not want to defeat the government, that he did not want to trigger off an election before the Liberal party had its convention on April 5. I have heard that with my own ears, Mr. Speaker, and I commend the Leader of the Opposition on his outspokenness. But after such a declaration, which newspapermen surely know about, what kind of about-face will they perform, these people who interpret everything according to politics or the amount of money they receive? The leader of the official opposition does not have to worry: they have not yet started to throw their poisoned darts at him. He will be safe so long as he remains on the side of big business.

After all that, I find it very difficult to understand all this commotion on the part of the Conservatives. Indeed, while their leader appeals for peace, they try to shout their war cries, or so-called war cries. Would this be another smokescreen, its only aim to delay the business of the house?

In our opinion, all serious-thinking people realize once again that the Ralliement des Cr ditistes must play its role as vigilant mediator in order to prevent futile squabbles which will necessarily be paid for by the people. I will be told that that is a great responsibility. It is the price of holding the balance of power. We realize that each judgment we pronounce influences our future. That is why all our members must feel completely free to act and vote as they wish.

Indeed, it is not enough to preach; one must set an example, and the house can rest assured that, within our party, the vote will be 100 per cent free. Some days we wish we had the wisdom of Solomon, but we are only human and all we have is our desire to work for the good of our constituencies and of the whole country.

[English]

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, it is a matter of regret that on a question as important as this one the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) is not in the house. It is even more a

matter of regret that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), whose responsibility is at stake here, is not in the house, and it is even more a matter of regret that the minister directly responsible, some would say, as the custodian of our constitution and our constitutional procedures, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau), deems it more advisable to appear on television, as he did about half an hour ago in the lobby, than to confront the house with the defence of the government's position. As a matter of fact, it is rather remarkable, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) pointed out, that in a debate of such seriousness only five cabinet ministers should be in the house. This is an indication of the supreme indifference and arrogance with which members of the cabinet treat this house.

No matter how long and how loud the members of the Cr ditiste party talk they cannot get away from the fact that they are doing a disservice to their leader who purported to be speaking for their party and are dissociating themselves from the proper position which they took last Monday night. There is no getting away from the positive position which the leader of that party took last Wednesday, and I should like to quote him from page 6905 of *Hansard* of February 21. After the Prime Minister's intention to put forward the motion now before us was announced the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) said:

If we believe that, in a democracy, parliament is the real sovereign of the country, we may say, in the present circumstances, that the government has been defeated by a parliamentary majority and that it should resign.

● (3:50 p.m.)

He did not leave it there. On the same page, we find this statement:

I see no other way out for the government than to go to the people and ask for their opinion on the way in which the business of the country is to be dealt with.

Again, on the same occasion and on the same page we find these words:

Under the circumstances, there is but one way out, and that is to go to the people.

Now, where is this situation resolved? When the Creator made these people on my left I think He threw away the jellymould. These circumstances recall the situation in 1963. These people have no more virtue now. In fact, it took about the same amount of time in 1963 because over the dinner hour they changed their minds. The deputy leader