

Motion Respecting House Vote

Mr. Howard: I understand there was a disposition to proceed between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. with a bill relating to the control of air pollution but possibly it would not be appropriate to do so today.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. MacEachen: Maybe we could get a decision now on the proposition to sit from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is no unanimous agreement. This proposition is not accepted.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, before lunch we heard a very eloquent speech by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) who expressed his views about the motion he put to the house on Wednesday.

Later, the leader of the official opposition (Mr. Stanfield) gave his objections. Then the leader of the New Democratic party (Mr. Douglas) talked about the present parliamentary situation.

Mr. Speaker, Jean-Paul Sartre said one day: "When the rich wage war, the poor are always the ones who die." I could say today that when politicians fight each other, the poor are again those who suffer, get poorer and look on, powerless, at a parliamentary spectacle which does not correspond at all to the aspirations of the Canadian people.

In fact, the situation where the parliament now finds itself is due directly to the government managing the national business. Nobody prevented government members from being in the house last Monday. Both the leader of the official opposition and the leader of the New Democratic party are right in blaming the government and even holding them responsible in the circumstances.

However, Mr. Speaker, the Ralliement Créditiste does not want to be any part of parliamentary games involving purely political interests.

It is nice to hear about the good intentions of the leader of the Conservative party when he says that the government has failed dismally in the administration of national business. I would have liked him to propose his solution to the present problem.

[Mr. MacEachen.]

• (2:40 p.m.)

Last Monday, the government was defeated. It is a real and actual fact. It was defeated by a vote of 84 to 82 on third reading of Bill No. C-193 designed to amend the Income Tax Act or providing for an increase in the personal income tax. If the government had then introduced Bill No. C-193 with a view to reducing taxes instead of increasing them, it would not find itself in the present situation.

When the government introduced its resolution designed to increase taxes, we opposed it through all stages of procedure and discussion. Since the government, through its Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) and all the ministers, has been telling us that Canada was in an alarming economic situation and that inflation was eroding our economy, we felt it was ill-timed to increase personal income tax. As a matter of fact, such an increase would contribute more or less to reduce the purchasing power of Canadian consumers in the face of the abundant riches existing in Canada. If the government had introduced a bill designed to distribute more evenly the actual wealth of Canada, it would not find itself in the present difficult situation of its own making.

Mr. Speaker, since last year, the ministers have been telling us over and over again that the country is in an awkward and dangerous financial situation which should cause us great concern. At the same time, the government has increased interest rates and yet, inflation is being feared. Nevertheless, this is inflation.

Loan companies have been allowed to do likewise. As a matter of fact, they have been allowed to increase their interest rate on housing loans, on pretext that there would be more money available for the construction of homes for the Canadian citizens. However, after the passage of all those measures by parliament, we are not only at the same point, but we are more bogged down than ever.

Some experts of the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation have established that if a Canadian wanted to build a small \$15,000 house, he would have to pay \$46,058 spread over a 35-year period. In view of this, how can one declare that such legislation is beneficial to the Canadian people?

While the Minister of Finance and this government allow those increases of interest rates and those tax increases, they are granting loans throughout the world on extremely easy terms.