

Motion Respecting House Vote

had dissolved the house and had called a general election there would have been incredible outcries that the government was beaten on a technicality and was pushing the country into a general election.

● (5:00 p.m.)

An hon. Member: It is not a technicality.

Mr. Trudeau: The point I am making now, Mr. Speaker, is that we are not trying, as we could under the rules, to revive the bill and put it back on the order paper.

Some hon. Members: Try it.

Mr. Trudeau: Hon. members say, "Try it". It is easy to defy us because we say we would not do so.

[Translation]

I will even go further, and I will say that it is not only the government's intention not to reintroduce this legislation, but that it is firmly determined to credit the taxpayers with the money they have paid under the bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Trudeau: The government recognizes that it is the will of this house not to collect taxes that way. Therefore, it is saying clearly and plainly to the taxpayers: The money you paid legally under this legislation, that money will be credited to you. It cannot be clearer than that.

[English]

Mr. Harkness: If you admit that this is the case, why did you call your defeat a technicality, as you did a few minutes ago?

[Translation]

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, what I am trying to explain just now is that it is not our intention to bring that bill back. That is the power of choice. The government, as long as it is the government, has the power of choice as to the way it governs—

[English]

Mr. Coates: Answer the question.

[Translation]

Mr. Trudeau: I am answering the question. We are masters of the house in the sense that we have to conduct the affairs of government. That is what it means to assume the power. We are—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

[Mr. Trudeau.]

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. members do not agree. Mr. Speaker, for eight days, we have been begging them to show their disagreement by a non-confidence vote.

We find it ridiculous, Mr. Speaker, that for eight days, the opposition which claims that we do not have the confidence of the house, refuses to express its non-confidence. We say: Give us the chance to end the debate; let us try and see whether or not we have this confidence. If you vote against the government, without any hesitation, we will resign.

But that, once again, is a very simple question, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

An hon. Member: Your time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Trudeau: How much time do I have left, Mr. Speaker?

[English]

Mr. Nugent: May I ask the question now, please? The question is simple.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The minister still has the floor.

Mr. Trudeau: If I have time left I will take all the questions. However, I have been challenged by many hon. members who have said: Let the Minister of Justice, with his great wisdom, speak on this question. There has been a great deal of irony about what I think. Well, listen to what I think.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the argument I want to put forward is that the people have a right to know whether or not the government has the confidence of the house. The people have a right to know whether or not this government controls the business of the nation, and since the people have a right to know, we on our part have an obligation to have the matter settled by the house. We have a moral obligation to ask this question, in order that the people may know what is what.

I am surprised at what this new theologian is saying: there was one in the past who was More, and now we have saint Thomas Douglas.

According to him, the moral obligation of placing this matter before the house does not exist. He says that we have a political obligation, a constitutional duty to do, but no moral right.