

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

this or we ought to do the other thing. They would have simply gone ahead and called an election, forcing the country into another period of adjustment during an election campaign merely for the advantage of the party in power.

It is easy to rationalize, Mr. Speaker, but it is difficult to reconcile the position the Liberal party took when they were in opposition and the position they are taking now they are in office. It has been stated today that the government fully intends to balance its budget. Well, that is a new one coming from this government. They have not bothered about the national debt for a long time and it has been increasing until we are now paying about \$1,300 million just in interest. They have not been very much concerned about balancing the budget up until this time. They say they are going to balance the budget this year and they state categorically they are going to get this money. There is no question about it; they say they are going to get the money. I do not know whether they are going to bypass parliament or how they are going to do it. However, they say they are going to get the money.

I should like to know how they are going to get the money. Are they going to increase taxes or are they going to cut back their expenditures? I feel this is a fundamental issue. There has been a great deal of talk about cutting back expenditures but there has been more lip service to the idea than practical application of the policy. I believe we have a right to know just how the government is going to handle the situation. Is there going to be a further increase in taxes or a cut-back in expenditures? If there is an attempt to increase taxes further after the defeat of the tax bill the government will face the same opposition that it has faced on this particular issue.

So far as we are concerned, Mr. Speaker, we cannot vote confidence in the present administration. Looking back over the past months we find confused priorities. The government has forced the house to deal with measures and issues that were not fundamental to the economy of this nation. Those measures had nothing to do with the material well-being of this great nation of ours. The government always had some particular plan it was interested in bringing before us, thus taking up time which should have been spent on the discussion of the serious problem the Prime Minister now states is upon us. Because of the confused priority list which we

have been forced to accept during the past months we cannot have confidence in this administration. Because of the contradictory policies that have been submitted we are unable to support the government.

Perhaps I could give one or two illustrations. I think of the housing program. The attitude of the government was that we ought to see to it that every Canadian can have his own home. They held out this ideal and then promptly introduced additional taxes on building materials. They promptly made possible a substantial rise in interest rates on mortgages through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation. They adopted policies that are making it impossible for Canadians to own their own homes.

The government was going to fight inflation. They said: We have to do this, that and the other to fight inflation. Then the government introduced a bill to increase taxes. We all know what effect increased taxes have on the cost of living. It is not the opposition that is fighting them; they are fighting against themselves. A house divided against itself cannot stand, we are told. I believe that even if we did not oppose the government they would collapse on their own because of their inability to face and to solve the major issues that confront us.

• (3:30 p.m.)

We in this group have constantly recommended monetary and fiscal policies that we believe are necessary to meet the needs of the present day. We have presented them in good conscience. We have presented them as our beliefs and in a way that would commend them to the consideration of the government. It is acknowledged that the present policies are not solving the problems; yet the government will not accept or follow policies that might lead them out of the woods and once more into the light. Therefore I say that in face of the monetary and fiscal policies of this government we cannot vote confidence.

The entire program of the government over the past months is evidence that the government does not know what to do in face of the urgent problems confronting us. We are told today that we cannot have another election, that we cannot upset the government because the country is in a critical position and Canada faces serious economic problems. We are told that an election might upset the balance and tip us over the precipice. I believe it was said today that if the government stays in office it will push us over the precipice anyway. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, I do not