

Motion Respecting House Vote

taxpayers \$450 million in expenditures. The Conservatives may laugh all they want but, fortunately, we are the ones with the balance of power, not them.

Mr. Valade: This is blackmail.

Mr. Gauthier: It is not blackmail, it is the truth. The real blackmail is what you read in the papers. I do not want to attack all newspapermen, for it is heartening to know that there are still a few honest newspapermen left. I would ask them to try and urge their colleagues to put an end to these abominations.

Say what you will, it is still up to the government to decide whether or not an election shall be called. The opposition can shout itself hoarse, those are the facts. The government, having flatly admitted the defeat of Bill No. C-193, and having declared it would not be introduced again, has said it did not consider this vote as a vote of non-confidence. That is its business, Mr. Speaker. In my view, it is the same as if the minister had risen before the vote and said, I give notice to the house that, even if this vote is negative, I shall not deem it to be a vote of confidence.

Mr. Speaker, of course there is a question of British traditions involved. This is precisely what we want to get rid of. Now we have just set a precedent. We have succeeded. All right! We have opened a door which will enable us to take a second step: provide in the standing orders of the house that, in the future, every member will be entitled to cast a free vote, according to his own conscience, since his vote will not be considered any longer as capable of defeating his own government. At last we have done away with the yoke of political parties, forced for so many years upon members of the old parties by finance barons who were paying for elections, with the result that Grits and Tories had to pass legislation which favoured them, whilst the working class was constantly called upon to foot the bill.

I do not want to blame any member of the two old parties, because I understand them sufficiently to feel really sorry for them. So, let them be assured that we shall resort to all possible means to promote legislative measures which will allow all the hon. members to get out of that party dictatorship where they cannot be fully themselves. Once again, we warn the house that the group which will act the fastest in that direction will get the support of the Canadian people, who will be the first to benefit therefrom.

[Mr. Gauthier.]

I realize that it is difficult for several hon. members to sever the umbilical cord which hold them yet to their fathers' myths since painless childbirth does not yet exist. Therefore, let them show a little resignation, a little more courage, a lot of responsibility, a boundless social spirit and especially, let them keep on working in order to reach the goal.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a word with regard to the rumour to the effect that a general election will be called tomorrow. I answer: No, Mr. Speaker, fully conscious of all the responsibilities involved, because the government is bound to act, and for two major reasons.

The house can be assured that if it is our duty to get some action on the part of the government, we shall work day and night, because time is getting short, and there are two main reasons for this.

• (3:40 p.m.)

In the first place, because we will wind up the business of this session in about a month, according to what we have been told. We will not have too much time and we will have to use our remaining hours to complete our office work.

In the second place, because to begin with I must look after the interests of Roberval constituency in which 6 per cent of the labour force is unemployed. To cope with this crisis, our municipal councillors have used every possible means and have sacrificed everything to carry out various winter works. But after more than two or three weeks of superhuman work, twelve municipalities of my constituency have not yet finally adopted their projects. Needless to say that all this requires the attention and the essential presence of the minister concerned. Can one imagine the extent of the disaster if tomorrow the minister had to close his office to launch an election? This means that, less than ever, is it time to abandon the battlefield, to desert our most sacred duty in order to play at elections.

There are, in my constituency, other urgent problems for which we must find a solution within a few days, and I am very much determined to continue my work in spite of all those senseless jokers.

Once the business of the house is completed, in a month or so, the way will be clear for election amateurs, if we are to force such expenses upon the people and if the people