

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

I think at this stage it would pay to repeat our position, as far as the constitutional question in this situation is concerned. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that we take the position that the government was defeated on so vital and fundamental a matter embracing their whole program and fiscal policy that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) now has a constitutional duty to the country. What is that constitutional duty? I suggest that the constitutional duty which he has to the country is the same constitutional duty that my party had on February 5, 1963, at which time the then prime minister, on his government's defeat, asked that the house be adjourned. I think the gentlemanly thing to do at this time would be to follow the same procedure.

• (5:50 p.m.)

I should like to refer to page 3463 of *Hansard* of February 5, 1963. However, before doing so I should like to say, after listening to government spokesmen today, that the impression is left that they think the mere terms of the bill or the mere statement that it is a vote of confidence or non-confidence alters the situation. I suggest to you, sir, that words in that regard do not alter the situation. If a bill is of such importance as this one, then the vote on it constitutes a vote of confidence in the government and it does not require a statement to this effect.

As I said, the situation last Monday was identical with the situation on February 5, 1963. At that time the main question before the house was that of nuclear weapons. Government supporters, who were then in opposition, voted down the Conservative government of that day. It is true that the motion before the house at that time was worded in such a way that it was only a motion of confidence. The point I want to make is that is a bill before the house is voted upon, regardless of whether it is on second or third reading, and is then defeated, that is the end of it. If it is a vital matter, it is a motion of confidence, and if it is defeated, the government should consider itself defeated just as effectively as if there were a straight motion of confidence before the house. I might point out that last Monday night the acting Prime Minister seemed to be completely lost. What did the prime minister and Conservative leader do on February 5, 1963? He said the following:

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I shall advise His Excellency the Governor General tomorrow.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Churchill), the adjournment of the house.

[Mr. Woolliams.]

The house was then adjourned and the leader of the Conservative government went to the Governor General and asked for dissolution. If this government gets away with what it wishes to do, I say it will destroy the very institution of parliament; it will destroy representative and responsible government. As my good friend behind me said, the government is setting up a dictatorship. We now have a king reigning in Canada for the first time, king Pearson I. He will not abdicate, nor will he quit when he is fired. He is like a tenant who will not leave when he is ejected.

That is exactly the position of this government. Surely there was an onus on the Prime Minister to go to the Governor General. If he did not wish to dissolve the house and go to the country, he should have asked the Governor General to ask someone else to form a government, someone who would have the confidence of the house and of the country.

As did all hon. members, I listened with interest to the Prime Minister speaking in the house today, and I listened to him on television. He gave us the impression in his appearance on television that he would quote from certain authorities to show that he had the legal and constitutional right to do what he was attempting to do—and which I and my party say his government has no constitutional right to do. Yet he never quoted from any authority. He merely referred to Jennings, who deals with situations when amendments are moved in a speech from the throne or on a budget and there is some question as to whether or not, when the government is defeated, the vote is to be considered a vote of confidence.

Ever since the government took office we have opposed their financial and economic policies. We have opposed the Gordon budget, we have opposed the sales tax, and we have opposed all the economic programs of this government. We have warned them that they would get into the financial debacle they face now.

The government takes great pride in Canada's image overseas. The house will recall that in 1962 and 1963, when the Liberal party which was then in opposition tried to blast the Diefenbaker government, its spokesmen referred to Canada's image abroad. I would like to read now an article in *The Economist* of September/October 1967. I believe it expresses the view of this party and of the Canadian people as a result of which the government has been fired, and is out. It has been defeated, not only on its tax bill but