

Motion Respecting House Vote

puts its hands on those it would anoint, to give a quotation from Horace.

What a night that was. Never have I seen so many humbled so low as the government and its supporters were humbled that day. And now we are told that all is well, that everything has been saved, that a committee has been formed and that they have arrived at a plan to circumvent, degrade and undermine the basic principles of parliament. I do not know who the members are but according to the press one of them is the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson).

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: He bought his striped trousers two years ago. He was over here a while ago and he is moving back in this general direction.

It is said that everything has been arranged. I will not deal with what the Prime Minister is alleged to have said, since he is not here, but last night there was an article by the Canadian Press setting out in detail the Prime Minister's tremendous contribution. I refer to that eulogistic statement: "He got back; the government ceased by degrees to be losing; he arranged everything and he lined them all up."

Well, sir, what a perversion has been produced in this resolution:

That this house does not regard its vote on February 19th in connection with third reading of Bill C-193, which had carried in all previous stages, as a vote of non-confidence in the government.

Well then, why do we have the bells ringing? Why do we call a vote at any time? I will not quote the authorities again. They have been referred to time and again. I emphasize that no amount of evasion, casuistry, circumlocution or downright deception can get away from the following words. I quote from page 461 of "Cabinet Government" by Jennings, that exemplar of the principles of parliamentary government quoted by the Prime Minister:

Four factors really determine the attitude of a government to a parliamentary defeat. The first is its loss of prestige.

This government had nothing to worry about on that score. The next point is this, and I am not adding any words of my own:

A weak government is a bad government.

This is a weak government, and it knows it. It is gluttonously hanging on to power because it knows how bad it is. It has invent-

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

ed this spurious attempt at parliamentary genius and in doing so it has followed in the footsteps of the late Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King. In 1940 he called parliament with the promise of another session. Parliament met at 2.30 p.m. and at four o'clock he said, "You are not here any more; I have dissolved parliament." He got away with it. In 1926 there was the notorious Byng-King incident, and the Liberal party got away with it. It did not get away with it in 1956 though when it trampled on parliament and desecrated every sacred principle of this institution. The government thought the people would forget. I continue reading:

Defeat is a sign of weakness which can be overcome only by resignation or dissolution.

There Jennings knew not whereof he spoke. That little matter can be overcome if you have Cr ditiste allies who believe in this little aphorism:

A marcidful providence fashioned us holler
O' purpose that we might our principles swaller.

I continue reading;

● (4:10 p.m.)

The second is the strength of its own cohesion.

Huh. If what has been said by the candidates be cohesion, then give us separation.

The third is the nature of the issue on which it has been defeated. It is ill-advised to risk a dissolution on a matter which can be made a point of attack on political platforms unless it feels it has a good defence with a wide popular appeal.

I had not intended to read that. How frightened you are.

The fourth is the importance of the proposal or matter on which it was defeated. A defeat on an important part of the budget, as in 1852 and 1885, is obviously too important to be passed over.

Well, that is how the party opposite was defeated. Canadians have been asking for action. We are told now that Canada is in a frightful financial position. This is the conclusion the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) has come to. Where are all the glorious descriptions of the past two years when we were assured that all was well, that everything was perfect? Today a terribly serious financial condition faces us. It has to be met. The people ask for action. They ask for relief from the highest taxation this nation has ever experienced. What relief is promised? Well, we are told: If this motion goes through the 5 per cent surtax will have gone by the board, but then we intend to plaster on an additional income tax. Mr. Speaker, those who vote for