

friend seems to have been saying things wildly. I can only assume, therefore, that he said these things because he really did not think there was very much he could say about the merits of the constitutional matter.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The Prime Minister chooses to argue that the government has the right to interpret a vote of confidence. I say he is in error, but I do not dispute his right to make this argument. If he chooses to argue that I am wrong concerning the significance I attach to the Monday defeat of the government, then I say I disagree with him; but I do not dispute his right to differ from me in public, or in private so far as that is concerned.

What are we to think when the Prime Minister of this country tries to tell the Canadian people that the opposition is irresponsible because it takes a straightforward and sincere stand on the constitution, a stand which is sincerely taken and clearly based on the best expert opinion concerning what is the right constitutional practice? The Prime Minister attempted to persuade the Canadian people that we are obstructing business. I wish to say that since I have been Leader of the Opposition I have afforded every reasonable accommodation to the government in respect of the conduct of the business of this house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the process of accommodation has been all one way. I believe the Prime Minister will know what I mean when I say that. Let me give an example. I do not do this because I make anything of this personally, but upon his return to the country on Tuesday I reached an understanding with the Prime Minister that it was reasonable that the house should adjourn for 24 hours in order to give him an opportunity to review what had happened and consider the situation so far as the government was concerned. Then on the motion to adjourn the house I asked for permission to make a very brief statement. In order to make that statement it was necessary that I have the consent of my hon. friends opposite. That consent was refused.

An hon. Member: By the Prime Minister.

Another hon. Member: The Prime Minister was the first to say no.

Mr. Stanfield: It is strange that the government should take the attitude that it is perfectly all right to refuse this accommodation

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to me, and then the next day come before this House of Commons to seek unanimous consent to waive notice regarding a very important matter. I can only believe, Mr. Speaker, that my hon. friends opposite have a very strange view as to how matters should be accommodated in this house.

• (12 noon)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I hasten to add that this was not the reason we refused permission to proceed on Wednesday, and I hope I never allow any attitude of this sort to influence any attitude I may have toward a matter that is brought before this house. We refused that permission because we took our stand on the constitution. But I do say that I find it extraordinary that in view of the accommodating attitude we have had toward the government and the conduct of business, the Prime Minister at the first opportunity should charge me in public with a desire, or a willingness at least, to obstruct the public business of this country.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Starr: He will stoop to anything.

Mr. Stanfield: And if it becomes necessary to conduct business as between the parties at arm's length I hasten to assure the house that the fault is not mine.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has also tried to suggest to the Canadian public that we have to accept the consequences of what we are doing and that we may bring about economic calamity in the country. I am very well aware, as are most Canadians, of the precarious condition of the country, very well aware of the precarious condition to which this government has brought this country—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: —a condition to which the government has brought this country through bungling, through politicking, through irresponsibility. Some might go so far as to say through stupidity—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: —and a stupidity which has brought the government to the verge of catastrophe. I am very well aware of this, and I have every intention to behave responsibly,