

Motion Respecting House Vote

● (4:10 p.m.)

Let me conclude on this note, Mr. Speaker. What will be the effect if this motion is passed? It permits the government to make a decision after the event and not before, as to confidence. We will be breaking new ground. It will then be incumbent upon the government, if this motion is accepted, with respect to any bill placed before the house to state prior to its being put before the house whether or not it is a matter of confidence. Certainly the opposition will insist that this be done. This is the only and inevitable result which comes from the passage of this motion.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, going down through all the years in our parliamentary history, with parliament now being entrusted with the only limitations which can be placed upon the government, surely when a matter of this kind, of this importance, of this consequence has been brought before the house and has been defeated, what other reasonable, honest and logical conclusion can there be but that it is a matter of such gravity that the government has no alternative but to resign?

People have said that there is no difference between members of this party and members of the party which now provides the government. I say there is, and this issue indicates it. Hon. members opposite believe they have a divine right, that they constitute the managerial elite who have the right to govern this country under all conditions and under all circumstances; and if the law, if the rules and regulations of this house, or if the constitutional precedents of hundreds of years interfere they can say, "Oh, we will jump over this law, we will jump over this precedent, we will ignore them." That is the difference.

We in this party believe in the rights of parliament.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Baldwin: We abide by the practices and traditions of parliament, and there is illustrated the difference between hon. members opposite and the members of this party. I would hope under those conditions all members who have any regard at all for the privileges and for the traditions of the House of Commons will vote down this motion which is now before the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. J. B. Stewart (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Public Works): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin this afternoon by reassuring [Mr. Baldwin.]

the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) on two points: First I want to say to him that there was nothing offensive to him personally intended by any member when unanimous consent was not given to him to speak on Tuesday.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stewart: If unanimous consent had been given it would have applied to all members, and we might then have had a general debate on the matter which is now being debated.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South): The Prime Minister refused.

Mr. Speaker: May we have order please?

Mr. Stewart: We might then have had a general debate on the matter which is now before the house, a debate far earlier than the hon. gentleman evidently wished.

The second point on which I wish to reassure him was that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) was not being unfriendly to him, the Prime Minister did not wish to upset him, when he used terms such as "trickery" and "manufactured crisis". Those terms are mild, even insipid, when compared with some that have come across the floor of this house from the quarter in which the hon. member now sits.

Mr. Monteith: The Prime Minister did not use those terms in the house.

Mr. Stewart: It is well to remember, sir, that other people have used expressions outside this house since last Monday night. For example, the Leader of the Opposition himself accused the government of trying in a "high-handed and presumptuous way" to make a "farce of parliament".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stewart: I can assure you, sir, that that harsh and inaccurate statement made outside the house and applauded within the house will not be regarded by the Prime Minister as something that should upset him greatly.

This morning the Leader of the Opposition insisted that last Monday two questions were decided by one vote, and decided conclusively. The first of these questions was whether or not Bill C-193 would then be read a third time, and the second question was whether or not the government had lost the confidence of the house. I think, sir, that there is no dispute on the first of these points.