

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, February 23, 1968

The house met at 11 a.m.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MOTION RESPECTING HOUSE VOTE ON BILL C-193

On the order: Government notices of motion:

February 21—The Prime Minister—The following proposed motion:—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.

Mr. Speaker: The right hon. Prime Minister. Order, please. Before the Prime Minister can proceed this order has to be transferred.

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, may I suggest that under the terms of the standing order this government notice of motion be transferred for consideration at the same sitting of the house later this day.

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to section 2 of standing order 21 this government notice of motion stands transferred to and ordered for consideration under government orders later this day.

Order, please. Orders of the day.

Mr. Pearson, seconded by Mr. Martin (Essex East), moves:

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.

Some hon. Members: Now.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: —the procedure would have been so much simpler if we had been given unanimous consent to discuss this motion last Wednesday.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to this motion I am not concerned at this time with the nature and purpose of the

income tax bill which, on third reading, was defeated last Monday. I am concerned with the circumstances of the vote last Monday and the question of confidence. That is what the motion is about. Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, it was of course an important bill that was defeated last Monday. There is no doubt about that. It was a money bill. It could have been rejected by the opposition at any of the previous stages.

An hon. Member: We tried.

Mr. Pearson: My hon. friend says "we tried". The resolution stage of this bill was carried by 61 government supporters. That does not represent much of a try on the other side. On second reading, which dealt with the principle of the bill, it could have been defeated by 85 members from the opposition. In committee on clause 5, which was such an important clause, it could have been defeated by 66 members of the opposition.

Mr. Starr: Tell us where your members were.

Mr. Pearson: On third reading it was defeated by a vote of 82 to 84.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): You are changing the rules in the middle of the game.

Mr. Pearson: I hope, Mr. Speaker, I may be given the same courtesy in moving this motion, which is a very important one, as we expect to extend to speakers opposite.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pearson: The decision taken last Monday night, in relation to confidence, was on the question that "this bill be now read a third time." That, as I said, was defeated by 84 votes to 82. I would like to assure all hon. members of the house, if the assurance is needed, that on no occasion and by no words outside the house—because I have had no opportunity yet to speak in the house about it—have I suggested in any way, shape or form that there was any collusion among opposition groups in that vote. Each group voted in accordance with its conscience and as it saw fit, and I have said nothing to the contrary. There was no suggestion of collusion of any kind made by me or anybody else. We, as the government, accept the fact of that rejection.