

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

To attempt now to undo by indirect means what the government dare not do directly is the height of irresponsibility.

They talk about trickery. What about this motion? If it is not trickery, what is trickery? Here is a motion which casts a slur upon parliament, a motion which reflects upon a vote of this house, tries to limit its effects, get the government off the hook and introduces a new definition of the word "confidence" as used constitutionally. Both directly and indirectly the motion reflects on parliament's actions.

Let it not be forgotten that these arguments could have been raised as points of order last Friday morning. We did not wish to impede the progress of the business of the house. We on this side took, almost unanimously, the responsible stand that we wished to get the matter settled, and get it settled we will. Nevertheless, the facts have to be made known. The Prime Minister said last night in the course of a national television broadcast that "the black headline of today is on page 37 next week." That is what he hopes. He hopes the Canadian people will continue to be bamboozled by those who irresponsibly disregard the constitutional position.

We now have a government which is telling parliament what to think, attempting to define what is and what is not a vote of confidence. The house voted that it did not have confidence in the government's policy. Now the government brings in a motion which in effect says: Oh, yes, you did. Those who are prepared to accept this advice are writing a final chapter to the authority of parliament and to parliamentary control of the executive by the people of this country. That is the position in which they find themselves, and it is a totally untenable one constitutionally.

The question is now before the jury, and while the jury may reject it because one or two of them have been influenced, there is always the court of appeal. The people of this country will decide whether this shabby and shoddy tactic by a discredited government which has lost the confidence of this house will be sufficient to get it back in office.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Steven Otto (York East):** Mr. Speaker, I think I have heard some of the best legal arguments both for and against this motion, arguments as good as could be put forward by any competent Philadelphia lawyer. And I dare say further arguments could be

advanced, one way or the other. But what it all boils down to is this. There is no doubt that so far as that vote was concerned the government was defeated.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Otto:** That is so according to the constitutional traditions, customs and usages at present. I wish to point out, however, that from time to time many motions and resolutions have been put forward by private members indicating a desire to institute reforms in this connection and provide for a better definition of "confidence" and "non-confidence" in parliamentary terms.

I believe that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) grasped the situation quite correctly when he indicated that despite the customs and usages of the past the people of Canada today were not in a mood to accept another election.

**An hon. Member:** After the event.

**Mr. Horner (Acadia):** Change the rules in the middle of the game.

**Mr. Otto:** I do not pay much attention to the argument that failure to pass the finance bill or something like it would mean fiscal ruin for the country. It is not a relevant argument. Nor does it matter whether the vote was contrived by trickery. In my opinion the Prime Minister very accurately grasped the mood of the people of Canada and I believe he made the proper decision. However, again I am taking the Prime Minister at his word when he said he was going to place a vote of confidence in his administration before the house. Then he continued by saying he felt the Canadian people wanted the government to continue in office, hold a convention to pick a new leader, have a new government, and then it would be up to the new prime minister to pick an election date.

• (4:30 p.m.)

If that is the motion then I say there are two parts to it. The first question is whether the present administration up to this moment deserves a vote of confidence, and the second question is whether a future government will deserve a vote of confidence. Those are two entirely separate questions.

Dealing with the first question of whether or not this administration deserves a vote of confidence, specifically my vote of confidence, I wish to point out that despite what may have been said I am not immune to party discipline and if I thought for a moment that