

dissolution of parliament. If it is not prepared to do that, this house ought to adjourn until the motion the Prime Minister is going to move can be debated.

Mr. Woolliams: That's right.

Mr. Douglas: I do not think this house has any right to proceed with any business until this matter has been settled. It seems to me, therefore, that the government should have a little time to make its decision as to whether it wants to seek the dissolution of parliament or wants to proceed with the motion the Prime Minister has read.

With that in mind, Mr. Speaker, it seems to me there is little value in trying to continue with the business of the house. The house ought to adjourn until Friday. If at that time the government wishes to proceed with this motion we cannot prevent it from doing so. In the meantime, I hope the government will take the decision of last Monday night as an indication that it has lost the confidence of this house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I deplore the interventions of some Conservative members when the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) rose to read the motion he is introducing today and which reads as follows:

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

Mr. Speaker, as the previous speaker just said, only the government, and nobody else, is to blame for the situation in which it finds itself at present. In fact, on the evening of the vote, the government did not have to move the third reading of Bill No. C-193; it did so, and the motion was defeated by a majority vote of the house.

If we believe that, in a democracy, parliament is the real sovereign of the country, we may say, in the present circumstances, that the government has been defeated by a parliamentary majority and that it should resign.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Caouette: The motion of the Prime Minister is to the effect that, on third reading, the bill had passed all the previous

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stages. It should be added that it was on division, since the various motions and the clauses of the bill were passed by the house on division, precisely because the government had a majority. We objected to Bill No. C-193 at the resolution stage. We are still opposed to it, and if the motion for third reading has been rejected by a vote in the house, I see no other way out for the government than to go to the people and ask for their opinion on the way in which the business of the country is to be dealt with.

● (2:50 p.m.)

I said earlier that the government alone is responsible for the situation in which it now finds itself. That is a fact. Monday evening the Deputy Speaker read the following motion:

Mr. Sharp, seconded by Mr. Benson, moves that Bill No. C-193, an act to amend the Income Tax Act, be now read a third time and do pass.

The vote was taken. Much importance is being attached to the word "now". At that time the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) could have objected to third reading and deferred it for a day or two, or even a week. This was not done. Instead, the Minister of Finance said arrogantly: Yes, let the motion be put to a vote. We voted, and the government was defeated. Under the circumstances there is but one way out, and that is to go to the people.

With regard to the motion, we all know it is to be debated in 48 hours. The Conservatives are opposed to debating it today, as well as the New Democratic party.

As far as the Ralliement Crétitiste is concerned, we would have allowed the government to discuss the matter today, in order not to waste any more public funds, through costly adjournments today and tomorrow. The Canadian people will be paying for that. We will probably be adjourning in a few moments to meet again only on Friday. In the meantime the Canadian people will be footing the bill.

Mr. Speaker, we would therefore have no objection to discussing the motion now, to throw light on the situation, to tell the government what we think, and to let the Canadian people know what is going on.

I feel that if all the members assumed their responsibilities we would allow the motion to be debated immediately to clear up the situation and straighten things out.