

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

thought of the good of the Canadian people. They have assessed all of the circumstances and made up their minds. I do not believe they deserve the condemnation of some of my colleagues and the press.

• (5:10 p.m.)

I am reminded of the fact that the press printed the names of the members who were not present. I believe there were 98 of them. The press has been severe in its criticism of absent members but no mention was made of the reason some of them were absent. A good many of our colleagues were on official business. This should have been stated. Some were in their ridings taking care of the needs of their constituents.

There are a few members, of course, who are often absent from the house, but it is the business of the whips and the leaders of the parties to take care of them. I do not believe there should be a general condemnation of all the members who were not here on Monday night. The other day in this house the leader of the Ralliement de Cr ditistes said: "I cannot vote against the government because I do not trust the Conservatives any more than I trust the Liberals." Personally, I would put it another way. I trust the two major parties and their leaders equally but I am one of those who feel that rushing into an election now would not be good, even for the Conservatives. What is the use of rushing into an election? We should give the Liberals a chance to get organized and then we can ascertain if there is any chance of having a government with a substantial majority. This is not the time for an election. During the week end I consulted with my constituents, and they belong to all the different parties. They indicated that a party like the Liberal party is entitled to go through a convention and choose its new leader. This is a democratic process and is part of our democratic system.

The international situation is also very complicated. This is one reason I would not like to be rushed into an election. There are many reasons which justify us in supporting the government. The economy of the country is in a critical situation, and we are not alone in this. Many countries in the world have sick economies. Our economy needs special care at this time. My constituents were also worried about the cost of an election and about the stagnation of business that occurs during an election. They were thinking also of the time this house would lose and of the many things with which we should occupy ourselves. I

[Mr. Mongrain.]

believe that the hon. member for Kootenay West (Mr. Herridge) mentioned this fact a minute ago. I want to congratulate him. He is a good independent, and I am waiting for the day when he will come and sit with us. I am reminded of the remarks made by a mid-nineteenth century politician, Mr. Macaulay:

Timid and interested politicians think much more about the security of their seats (or their party) than about the security of the country.

My people are convinced also that if we have an election now the result will be a minority government. So what is the use of going through all that expense? Let us wait until the major parties are properly organized and then the independents and other parties will watch the big struggle. We will have a lot of fun. I pray that we are not charged amusement tax for that fun. We have a lot of work to do now so this is not the time for an election. I would remind the house of what Abraham Lincoln said, that you do not swap horses in midstream; you wait until the river is crossed.

I believe the first thing we should do is to amend the procedure of the house so that when there is a confidence vote members will have notice of it. They will know what they are voting for. This should have been done by the Conservatives or the Liberals long ago. We have just lived through a situation through which we should not have had to live. I have a suggestion for the Liberals. Instead of raising taxes on the little people, why not take a second and a third look to see if you cannot cut expenditures, to see if you cannot cut the defence budget by a few hundred million? This is the time to live within our means. This is not the time to spend, spend.

We should realize that taxes are high, as are interest rates. The banks are already charging 7.5 per cent and 9 per cent is being charged on some mortgages. I believe it is high time expenditures were cut before our people go bankrupt. I feel we should postpone an election until later this year. I am one of those who believe we should have an election this year but not at this time. This is a time for action, not for an election. If we called an election we would be acting like irresponsible politicians. Our reputation across this country is not too good. There is no point in closing our eyes to this fact. I believe it is high time we improved our reputation and acted as responsible politicians. If we do not there will