

exhibited by my right hon. friend. As to the question of order, parliament has been summoned for the very purpose expressed in this motion—to ascertain, owing to the numerical position of various parties and groups as a result of the election, who should be the executive and carry on the administration. We are taking the very first step and the earliest opportunity possible to submit this question to the judges, to parliament. My right hon. friend is one in parliament, as I am one. We are all equal here, and the question whom parliament wants as the executive, the board of control, the cabinet in Canada at the present time, must be decided by members of parliament, not by the cabinet. This being the issue to decide which parliament has been summoned, after we have been charged with being usurpers who have no authority—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Then why does my right hon. friend object to having that issue decided?

Mr. WILSON (Wentworth): The people decided it.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Yes, the people as represented in parliament, not the people of one province or another. The people of all the provinces of the Dominion, as represented here by the members whom they have elected, are the judges. Now, it was a physical impossibility to give any notice prior to the introduction of the motion. Parliament met only yesterday.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, Oh.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Who says "Oh"! Could any notice have been legally given before parliament met? Does anybody contend that this was possible? Obviously it was impossible to give such notice; and now, under our constitutional rules and in accordance with precedent, parliament has the right to assert its power to deal with any public questions of importance before taking up the consideration of the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. And in order to preserve that privilege it is customary to introduce, immediately after the meeting of parliament, a pro forma bill dealing with the oaths of office. The purpose of this is merely to maintain this right of the House of Commons to take up any matter of importance before proceeding to discuss the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. The grave matter of public importance at the present time is to decide who, as a result of the electoral situation which was created on October 29

last, shall be the executive of parliament and shall carry on the administration of the government. This is the very first matter which we must decide, and it is the matter that forms the subject of this motion.

Mr. ROBERT FORKE (Brandon): This is a very important resolution which, I think, calls for the serious consideration of every member of the House. The decision which will be reached upon it will be a momentous one and will have a far-reaching effect upon the future proceedings of this House. The suggestion seems to me a reasonable one, that this should be regarded merely as a notice of motion that the matter shall stand over for full consideration until Monday, when it may be discussed carefully. I am sure that hon. members in this part of the House would like to have some time to consider the matter and to come to an intelligent conclusion before voting upon the motion.

Hon. R. B. BENNETT (West Calgary): The question now before the House is one of order, whether or not the motion which has just been moved by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) is such as may be made without notice. Clearly, under our parliamentary system, it is not such a motion; it may not be moved in the absence of proper notice. I think the authorities are clear on that point. But regarding the question that was raised by the hon. gentleman as to how the sentiment of the House might be ascertained, surely he has not forgotten that in 1868—I am speaking solely from memory, so that my dates may not be absolutely correct—Disraeli resigned before meeting the House; and later, Lord Salisbury's administration challenging the House, was defeated by a vote of forty. This defeat was not the result of a substantive motion but occurred upon an amendment which was moved to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. And it will perhaps be recalled that when the Baldwin administration went to its fate not long since it did not challenge its existence merely by asking parliament to adopt a motion asking for approval or confidence. In that House there were three groups, namely, Liberal, Labour and Conservative, and Mr. Baldwin met parliament with his Speech from the Throne and the fate of the administration was challenged by an amendment moved by Mr. Clynes, in which he asked parliament to declare that the administration had lost the confidence of the House. That is the way in which the fate of the British administration was challenged; and I venture this opinion, speaking from memory, that there is no record in our parliamentary institutions of a vote of confidence, in itself ever having been proposed by