

Motion Respecting House Vote

The Secretary of State for External Affairs says the time has come for strong leadership, a reflection on the present leadership. Then there is the Minister of Finance, who said in Halifax weeks ago, long before this particular crisis developed, "Some of my colleagues won't speak to me." All this is recorded for posterity; it was a statement made over national television. If any minister wishes to get up and deny the accusations I am making, which reflect on the Prime Minister and the Liberal leadership, he is free to do so and I will come forward with the proof.

• (3:00 p.m.)

Some of the cabinet ministers have continually contradicted statements made outside this house. Last night, during the few moments that were at my disposal, I thought for a minute that that great expert on the constitution, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Trudeau), was going to rise and have something to say. The other day I noticed that when the leader of the New Democratic party mentioned his name he picked up his papers and rushed from the house, and he was still rushing when he got out where the television cameras were because he was climbing over the balcony to get away from the very thing he was courting the week before.

That constitutional expert has not opened his mouth on this crisis. Not one minister opposite has got up and done anything in the way of supporting the motion brought forward by the Prime Minister. Why? It is because they agree that the leadership they are getting is weak. What is this fight all about? It is only about one thing, to save Pearson's face. It is the Pearson pride. Some time ago it was indicated that the Prime Minister had every intention of retiring. What we are doing now is only holding back that retirement for a month or so. The Prime Minister went before the Canadian people and said there would have to be an election soon. June was mentioned. September was mentioned. In the same breath he said that a decision on an election would have to be made by the new leader of the Liberal party.

What do we hear from that potential leader over there, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer)? He should be ashamed of the situation where he has been accused of something in this house, but he does not have the intestinal fortitude to get up and defend his government's position. Of course lack of intestinal fortitude is something that minister

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South).]

has shown all along. Here is a potential leader of the Liberal party who says he would not call an election before 1969.

We also have the Minister of Finance as a potential leader, and he too says he would not call an election before 1969. We also have an outsider running for the Liberal leadership; and when I say outsider I mean outside that particular group over there, and I think that is a good thing. These potential leaders of the Liberal party say they would postpone an election until 1969, but the present leader says that eventually the people of the country will have to decide this issue.

What is the issue? We are asked to vote confidence in a government the members of which do not have confidence in one another. You name a minister and I will get you a contradiction from another minister. They don't even sit together any more. We had to rearrange the seating in this house for them. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen), taking advantage of the fact that he is a potential leader of the party, cast reflections on two other ministers. When the Minister of Finance was asked the question directly as to whether the Minister of Transport had prodded him into his present situation he would not confirm it. I say again that accusation was in the question, but the minister would not confirm it.

So what do we have? We have potential leaders of the Liberal party who, despite the fact that they were told by the Prime Minister to stay close to Ottawa, did not. The Prime Minister takes himself off to Jamaica, running away from the responsibility which was handed to him by the Canadian people in 1965 and which he could have carried until 1970. He continually runs away from this responsibility. There has been absolutely no direction. No responsibility is shown by the Prime Minister. He comes back to this house and says one thing to it, and something else to the people of Canada over television.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, to see that the Prime Minister is leaving the chamber. I would like to quote one of his own remarks to him before he goes. We have been faced with dishonest answers in this house, these coming from the Prime Minister himself. Hon. members opposite can run back and tell him about this. He stood up in this house and gave dishonest information to the house on more than one occasion. I will relate briefly—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member should be cautioned again on his language. I