

Motion Respecting House Vote

The statement which has been made is that the government should follow the responsible, respectable and proper course of action by offering its resignation after having been defeated on a vote which can be interpreted in no other way than as a vote of non-confidence. This is what the Leader of the Opposition has said. This is what the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas) has said. I think it should be made perfectly clear at this time. The Minister of Finance has urged: Let us finish with this business and deal with the problems which face us. Mr. Speaker, that is what parliament did on Monday night. It got rid of the problem which faces us and the country—the government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Baldwin: The minister made much of what the government's accomplishments have been. For my part I should like to paraphrase a remark once made by a distinguished statesman: Never have so many ministers done so little for so many people.

In the first instance I think it must be made absolutely plain that Her Majesty's loyal opposition has not changed and will not change the position it originally took with regard to the status of the government following the events of Monday evening, irrespective of what might be the position of the ministers pursuant to statute. The government has certain privileges and it has certain responsibilities in this house. Those privileges include the constitutional practice, hallowed by hundreds of years, of submitting its resignation following defeat in a vote which can only be interpreted as a vote of no confidence. This is the attitude we took from the beginning. We are taking part in this debate, as we should as responsible and reputable members of parliament, but our position has been made clear as reported in *Hansard* of Wednesday last when I, on behalf of this party, entered a caveat as to the rights of the government with respect to further proceedings in this house.

The vote on Monday night represented a major defeat and cannot be redeemed. The government lost the confidence of the house at that time and I would say to the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) in the words of the ancient Persian—

The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,
Moves on; nor all your Piety nor Wit,
Shall lure it back to cancel half a Line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it—

Miss LaMarsh: Just a Jug of Wine and Thou.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Mr. Baldwin:

—A Loaf of Bread—and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness—
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

Nor, I might add, any of your allegations of trickery or subterfuge.

I regret very much that the statement made by the Prime Minister today did not constitute a complete and unequivocal repudiation of the remarks he made during the television broadcast on the C.B.C. national hook-up the other night. I admit that all of us in this house hold and express strong views from time to time. We were elected by our constituents to represent them and to put our views before hon. members strongly and firmly. And from time to time we say things particularly in the house, that we ought not to say. But in this case the right hon. gentleman made a series of statements before an audience of millions of people.

To examine the purport of what was said on that occasion one must look at the entire transcript of the broadcast. No other interpretation could be drawn from it but that members of this house who took part in the proceedings on Monday night were guilty of subterfuge and were engaged in conduct which would bring them into disrepute and contempt.

• (4:00 p.m.)

I suggest that the right hon. gentleman review what he said today and review what he said the other day. Then I am sure he would come back into this house and make a full and frank repudiation of the text and intent of what he said the other day. Until he does this I believe a blot or a cloud will stand over the names of all hon. members who participated in the proceedings of this house and who voted last Monday.

There has been some discussion concerning the position of the government on votes of this kind and other votes. The Prime Minister has attempted to set out what in future, no doubt, will be referred to as the Pearson principle on confidence motions. Before dealing with this I think it is essential that the members of the house examine the background and have a look at the present situation concerning democratic processes and the machinery of parliamentary government.

It is becoming increasingly clear, and is becoming a matter of a great deal of concern to all of us who believe in this system, that the powers and rights of the legislature are being steadily diminished while the powers and rights of the executive are growing at an