

*Motion Respecting House Vote*

fact, he could do a combination of these two things. He could get a caretaker prime minister who could prorogue this session, start another one immediately or whenever he wished, and exactly the same tax bill could be reintroduced in the new session because that bill is only barred from consideration this session. The new administration would have a free hand and would have a much better chance of co-operation. I want to tell the house frankly there will be no co-operation with this government. If we reach a vote on this motion and the government wins, it will be the most hollow vote of confidence parliament has ever seen.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Nugent:** There will be no co-operation because any prime minister who would demand such unswerving loyalty of his backbenchers that they would betray their duty to this house to uphold responsible government in favour of making such a mockery of it in order that the Prime Minister shall not be embarrassed by leaving a little earlier than he intended is going so far and is delivering such an insult to this house and to the nation that I do not think anyone in the house would consider his action favourably. Hon. members should consider the aftermath if this motion carries. May I call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

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**AFTER RECESS**

The house resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Nugent:** Mr. Speaker, before supper I had outlined what I thought to be some of the considerations before us on the motion the government asks us to accept. Perhaps in the few minutes left at my disposal I should review those considerations, particularly those in respect of what we will be doing by accepting this motion.

It has been our custom in this house and in the British parliamentary system that all important money bills be considered as confidence motions. This has formed the real basis of control by parliament over the executive. This has been the custom, the usage and the

[Mr. Nugent.]

practice of the parliamentary system, and it has never been questioned in this house during the time I have been here, or during the time some of my colleagues have been here, which is much longer.

In the past all major matters, including money matters, have been accepted as matters of confidence, whether so designated or not. Had they not been, under present circumstances our present political party system would be impossible. Parties take their stand on this basis, which makes it possible for voters to decide whether candidates of various parties have performed their campaign promises, and gives them an opportunity to do something about it in the future, if they have not.

On the basis of what the Prime Minister has said, that the defeat last Monday night on this money bill did not bring on a question of confidence, we dare not overlook the significance of his attitude toward what we should do in the future. He did not say the money bill was a matter of confidence—and this has always been recognized—but he did say that the defeat of that bill did not involve any question of confidence. He suggests that the only time there shall be a question of confidence on which the government's life is at stake is when the government says so.

Under these circumstances we would be faced with a situation wherein important matters such as money bills would not be recognized *ipso facto* as confidence matters. If the importance of a matter is not the criterion as to whether a question of confidence is involved, and if the decision as to whether the government survives or falls relates only to a declaration on the part of the government then according to the Prime Minister, the only way for a government to make sure it will survive a confidence motion is to declare the motion as a confidence motion after it has survived the vote. I suggest the Prime Minister's words, his actions in presenting this motion, and the entire course of the government's conduct up to this time have indicated exactly what I have suggested.

What is at stake here in this house is whether or not we shall have any realistic control over the executive. We do not need to think back far to remember the days of Hitler and the minor amendments he brought in to make sure the government had the power it needed, with the result that the Reichstag became powerless.