

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, February 21, 1968

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

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PROPOSED MOTION RESPECTING HOUSE VOTE ON BILL C-193

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a motion has been submitted for the order paper in the following terms. I move, seconded by Mr. Martin (Essex East):

That this house does not regard its vote on February 19th in connection with third reading of Bill C-193—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Starr: What does this government regard?

Mr. Pearson: My hon. friends seem a little excited.

Mr. Starr: You are more excited than we are.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Pearson: Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, I might be allowed to read this motion which has been submitted to the order paper. It continues:

—in connection with third reading of Bill C-193 which had carried in all previous stages, as a vote of non-confidence in the government.

Without going into the substance of this motion at this time, and in a purely procedural way I ask for unanimous consent—

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Pearson: —that notwithstanding the 48 hour regulation this motion may be considered at once by this house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we take the position that this government has no right to put any business before this house—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: —including a motion of confidence. It was defeated on a bill to raise

taxes, a fundamental part of the government's program, a defeat clearly involving a loss of confidence of the house.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The constitution and the constitutional practice must be respected. It is fundamental to our constitution that such a loss of a fundamental vote of confidence involves resignation or a recommendation for dissolution.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The government, to try to place any business or any substantive motion before this house, would make a mockery of the vote that took place on Monday evening.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: There is no precedent for a government defeated on such a fundamental matter as this to then try to do further business with the house, as it tried to do on Monday evening following that defeat—actually being defeated twice on that occasion—and again now trying to do so by putting this motion before the house.

I say, sir, that the government is flouting the constitution. It is flouting parliament. It has no right to present such a motion.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: We therefore cannot agree to waive notice. To do so would be to make light of the vote that took place on Monday night. Furthermore since we believe and are convinced the government has no right to make such a motion, we certainly cannot agree to waive notice.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

• (2:40 p.m.)

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the members of the New Democratic party take the position that while the government may have a constitutional right to ask the house for a vote of confidence, it has no moral right—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.