

*The Address—Mr. Knowles*

opinion of the house. I regret to say it did not follow that opinion but immediately, under the rules of the house, brought in another supply motion to test confidence in the government; and so we carried on. But this was a supply motion—even more a test of confidence in the government than a motion on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne—which was amended by the house without an election being the result.

On June 12, 1951, again in supply, Mr. Drew moved an amendment calling for the setting up of a special committee on procedure. This is standard practice in these halls. There was quite a debate. The government decided that the arguments put forward by the opposition were effective and valid, and so at the end the amendment was accepted. There was no vote, but the original supply motion brought in by the government was passed as amended, and so there had to be another supply motion in order to carry on.

This happened again on May 6, 1953, when Mr. Fleming moved an amendment calling on Mr. St. Laurent, when he went to Washington on that occasion, to use a little more vigour in connection with the negotiations he was to have with the Americans. After discussion Mr. St. Laurent agreed it was good to have this expression of opinion from the floor of the house, saw no reason to oppose it, and so the supply motion, as amended, was carried, to put it out of the way; and we had another supply motion in order to carry on with the business of parliament.

Therefore I suggest that, against only three occasions when an adverse vote of the House of Commons brought on the question of an election, there have been these many occasions when an adverse vote did not have that result, but was an expression of opinion of the house and left it free to carry on.

In recent years there have been several cases in this same category. There are still many members of the house here who were present in 1955 for the debate on the Defence Production bill. For the record let it be clear that our party did not share in the kind of criticisms the Conservatives were making of that legislation, so, I have to give the credit to the Conservatives for the fight they put up. The fact is that as a result of the efforts of the official opposition on that occasion serious and drastic changes were made by the government in the Defence Production bill. These were changes which the government initially said it could not possibly make—that the bill had to go through as it was. But the

bill was changed. Did this mean the government was defeated? No, the government paid some attention to the opinions expressed on the floor of the house, and parliament carried on.

In 1963 there was a comparable situation. In the part of that session held before the summer recess we had before the house the first resolution concerning the Canada Pension Plan. There was a portion in it having to do with the old age security pension. An amendment was moved to that resolution calling for an increase from \$65 to \$75 a month to take place right away. Actually that amendment never came to a vote. We had a summer recess. The feeling in the country was pretty strong. The opposition parties were expressing that feeling very vigorously, and when the house came back in September the government came before us with a proposal to increase the old age security pension from \$65 to \$75 a month.

I suggest this present matter is in the same category. In 1963 it was a case of the government being made aware of the opinion of the House and bowing to that opinion, bowing to what amounted to an adverse judgment of the house itself; and yet parliament carried on.

We had the same thing last year when we had before us the government's legislation known as the Canada Labour (Standards) Code. We were in committee on the clause providing for seven statutory holidays. Most hon. members will well remember my amendment to add an eighth one, November 11, to that list. We had a vote in committee of the whole on the appropriate clause, and my amendment carried in spite of the very strong position the then minister of labour had taken that the amendment should be defeated. Was there a call for an election on that occasion because of an adverse vote, a vote against the government? No. The government accepted it as an opinion of the house, and went along with it. Indeed it became law.

We are 265 grown men and women. I think we should be in that position more often than we are. We should be able to vote separately on an issue by itself, such as raising the old age pension to \$100 a month, and then the question of whether or not there should be a dissolution and an election.

Some people are trying to say that because of the position we are taking we are asking that all of the traditions of parliament be abandoned, that we are asking to have it two ways—that we want to express an opinion, want to be able to vote against the