

*Defence Production Act*

frequently and what I think we know, that power once held is never willingly released but always augmented if possible. The minister seized on this chance to get back his wartime powers, and he is now determined to have these powers for as long as he wants and without any question of referring back to parliament to have them extended or not extended or perhaps taken away from him. He is not going to take any chance on losing them or on making again what he no doubt considers the mistake of relinquishing these powers.

What he did in 1951 was really getting in the thin edge of the wedge, with the passing of this Defence Production Act in a period of emergency, with a time limit on it and so forth. But now he wants to drive in that wedge right to the hilt, and to embed it so firmly and strongly in the constitution that we will never be able to get it out; at least we will never be able to withdraw it as long as he is minister.

Now let us look at another statement by the minister which is found on the same page, immediately beneath the previous one I read:

The munitions and supply act was enacted in 1939 and was amended from time to time as the experience of the department indicated was necessary. The present act was based on the final edition of the munitions and supply act, and has proved to be comprehensive enough to cover all the situations we encounter in defence purchasing.

The part I wish to emphasize is that the present act was based on the final edition of the munitions and supply act. In other words the present Defence Production Act to which this amendment relates was based on the act which was in force at the very peak of the minister's dictatorial powers during the war. He took as the model for this act the form of the act when he was right at the top as far as dictatorial powers were concerned. The minister wants nothing but the best, nothing but the most extreme, as far as these dictatorial powers are concerned. Not for him any watered down version of these special or extraordinary powers, not for him any cold war shadow of his hot war powers. He wants the whole thing. He wants all or nothing. He went on in a subsequent statement to elaborate on that again, and I would like to put that on the record. At the top of page 4511, on the righthand side, of *Hansard* for Tuesday, June 7, 1955, the minister said:

In my opinion these are the powers needed to carry out Canada's defence production program. Either you have a defence production act with these powers, and all these powers, or you have no act at all.

The minister is not prepared to admit that you could have a Defence Production Act  
[Mr. Harkness.]

which would be quite adequate for the present situation to enable him to operate and get all the supplies he needs without having all of these special and extraordinary powers which he secured and had at the very apex of his position during the last great war in 1939-1945. He must have them all. Apparently nothing will satisfy the minister except complete power to do as he wishes as far as the economic life of the country is concerned.

With all these powers, as has been pointed out by the minister and by others, I believe it is true that he will not use a large number of them. There are quite a few of these specific sections, and so forth, he will not use; but the important thing is that he has a bludgeon once he has this passed, a bludgeon with which he can threaten any businessman or any other person in the country to get what he wants. I have no doubt that is a very satisfying feeling for the minister to have. He likes to be in that position. He was in it for a long time; he has admitted in his own speech he was disappointed when he got out of that position, and was glad to get back into it when the Korean war came on.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I am very sorry to interrupt the hon. member but I am obliged to advise him that his time has expired.

**Mr. Dickey:** Would the hon. member permit a question from me now?

**Mr. Harkness:** Yes.

**Mr. Dickey:** Would he be good enough to tell us the sections in this Defence Production Act he considers abrogate the rights of parliament?

**Mr. Harkness:** Yes. I think section 5 is one that would come in that category, and sections 15 to 32 or 33 inclusive—I have forgotten exactly which—would come in that category. Most of them at any rate are far beyond what is needed.

**Mr. Dickey:** I was asking about those that abrogate the rights of parliament, not whether the powers are needed.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** They all do that!

**Mr. Harkness:** As Mr. Speaker has indicated that I have come to the end of my time, I do not wish to transgress.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Saved by the bell.

**Mr. Harkness:** I fear I cannot answer. I had a considerable number of words for my hon. friends, the socialists on my left, and I am sorry I am not able to give them.