

present ministry is determined to have power which will enable it to secure and to spend all the money it pleases, which is the equivalent of imposing taxes to the extent it pleases, and to legislate just as it pleases, irrespective of both houses of parliament and of His Excellency the Governor General who, it must be remembered is also one of the constituent elements of parliament. That is the position to which we have been brought. Hon. gentlemen may hesitate to accept my word with respect to what I have been saying.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): You bet.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Well, perhaps the hon. gentleman will accept the word of the Prime Minister. I regret that I cannot, after what the Prime Minister said to this parliament last session. Let me give the quotation.

Mr. BELL (Hamilton): That is very different. His word is worth something.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Here is what the Prime Minister said in the last session of parliament, after the opposition had stressed the importance of parliament reserving to itself its right in these matters, especially when parliament was in session. My right hon. friend is reported at page 4448 of Hansard of 1931 as follows:

Mr. Bennett: I am not without full realization of what is involved in the bill, but in order to meet my right hon. friend I will shorten the time to March 1 and make it clear that we have no desire to usurp powers as was suggested.

No desire to usurp powers as was suggested.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is the reason why the date was changed from March 31 to March 1, so that the rights of parliament would not be usurped while parliament was in session. But this year the Prime Minister brings in a bill in which he says that these same powers shall continue, not until March 31, the date he had originally set in last year's measure, but until May 1, and for two months the powers of this parliament are to be usurped. That is the only interpretation that can possibly be put upon what this bill proposes. I asked the Prime Minister the other night what he meant when he changed the date and made that statement last year to parliament. I say that when he made that statement to parliament he was giving the word of the Prime Minister of Canada to the parliament of this country, and that word ought to have been respected above everything else.

Mr. BENNETT: May I interrupt the right hon. gentleman? That word has been respected.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: In what way?

Mr. BENNETT: Just in this way. I understood that I would not usurp the power of parliament and that parliament would be called together in order that parliament might itself extend the power, and that we would not take it otherwise.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We hear the Prime Minister now say that what he was going to do was to call parliament together so that there would be no danger of usurping the power of parliament.

Mr. BENNETT: And we did.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am glad that my right hon. friend has interrupted. Now let us see what he said to parliament the other night, this after parliament had been called together. He made pretty plain the other evening his view of parliament, and what parliament amounted to in regard to this very enactment. My right hon. friend, in introducing closure, made a speech in which he said more than he intended to say, and in which he publicly revealed his mind perhaps a little more than he had disclosed it even to his own colleagues. At any rate, here are his words. I ask that they be considered in connection with the explanation, which the Prime Minister has just given, of the meaning of his words last session. In the Hansard of March 23, 1932, at page 1414 my right hon. friend says:

I would not ask this power—

That is the arbitrary power that he now seeks, this power to legislate by the ministry in regard to peace, order and good government apart altogether from the Commons or parliament itself:

I would not ask this power from any parliament except reluctantly, and I so stated when I introduced the resolution the other day.

I think that "I" is rather significant. "I" would not ask for this power: "I" want this power. There is the voice of the dictator, if you wish. "I" want this power and "I" am going to have it. "I" would not ask for it if "I" did not need it.

Mr. BURY: What about "I" would not give a five cent piece?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The Prime Minister goes on to say:

We do not believe that this power will be called into play; nay, more, we sincerely and fervently hope that it will not be. But, sir, what is a man without a weapon in the midst of armed force?