

*Emergency Powers Act*

have not been fulfilled, we withdraw our support at this time. In other words our support was given because we believed that something was going to be done. When that something was not done I believe—without being in any way accused of trying to impose our minority will upon the majority of this parliament—we are equally bound to withdraw that support.

Having in view what the government has failed to do under this measure, I cannot anticipate any emergency arising as to which, under the various statutes that have already been mentioned this afternoon, the government would not have all the power necessary to deal with any situation that might arise. If a situation arose with which the government had not the power to deal, then the War Measures Act is there—if it is insurrection, civil strife, war or apprehended war—and parliament can always be called. The minister may say: "But what is going to happen if parliament is dissolved and we have two months without a parliament?"

I admit immediately to the minister that, on the surface, that would seem to create a difficulty; and I may tell him quite frankly that we have discussed this measure from that angle. But we believe that, under the statutes that have been enumerated this afternoon—and I am not going to put them on the record again—the government has the power to do all that is necessary. One statute that has not been mentioned is the sedition act under which the government can deal with acts of sedition quite adequately at any time. Then of course there is something which I know the government does not wish to rely on but which is there for an emergency. They have always the power inherent in the constitution to deal with matters that arise under peace, order and good government.

Consequently I do not think the government has made out a case for the continuance of this act under the conditions that we have today or that may be apprehended in the future. It seems to me the only thing which could happen in the future which would involve those powers, the greater powers, is war or apprehended war. I do not think we are likely to have insurrection or civil strife in this country. Indeed I sincerely hope not.

A great deal has been made of a secret order in council. I referred to it the other afternoon, and I said I had neither seen it nor read it. That is the truth. I was searching my memory to recall if I knew anything about this measure which I had forgotten, which was passed on July 4, 1951. My good friend the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) returned

yesterday, and he reminded me that in the autumn of 1951 he put a question on the order paper, and the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) approached me and asked if I would suggest to the hon. member that it would be in the public interest not to press that question. I suggested to the Prime Minister that he see my hon. friend at that time.

Well, I have no knowledge even now of what that order contains, yet I do know that it had to do with the matter of external security. I must leave it at that because that is the extent of my knowledge of the measure. I would like to say that because I may have left the impression the other afternoon that I had no knowledge such an order existed. My memory was not as good on Tuesday afternoon as it usually is, and I want to say that I did know in a general way something about the order in council.

I do not like the idea of secret orders in council under any circumstances. I admit there are occasions when the government must act with the knowledge that to give all the information to the press openly would defeat a desirable national objective. I admit that immediately.

Of course this is not the first time orders in council have been passed that were put secretly in the drawer. I would remind my hon. friends to my immediate right that on December 31 of either 1931 or 1932—I am speaking entirely from memory without having looked it up this afternoon—Right Hon. R. B. Bennett passed two orders in council one of which permitted the banks to publish balance sheets that were substantially false, in other words to value securities at a level that was not warranted by the situation that then existed, and the same thing was done for life insurance companies. Those two orders in council came to the attention of this House of Commons. I remember when the Right Hon. Mr. Ilsley, Mr. Justice Ilsley now, and the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power) raised the matter a couple of years later and brought the situation to light.

I did not like that being done. The contention was made that that was done in the public interest, to prevent a panic and a run on one of the great banks—I am not going to name it—and to reassure people who had held policies particularly in one of the great insurance companies, and again I am not going to name it.

But whether or not these orders in council were justified is not what I am discussing. I am merely saying that I do not like the idea of secret orders in council, and the emergency powers bill now before us, approv-