

Emergency Powers Act

legislation it adopted last September with the declared purpose of dealing with these things. We have had inflation by procrastination. I suggest that as we proceed to deal with this bill the government make it clear that it intends to exercise the powers it seeks and tell us, as the representatives of the people of Canada, exactly what measures it is going to employ and what measures it is not. Let us pass from those loose warnings to the rule of law, to the constituted administrative responsibility under the authority given by parliament.

Mr. Howe: The big stick.

Mr. Drew: I realize that the Minister of Trade and Commerce does not believe in any rule of law. Nevertheless I have been reassured, as I am satisfied a great many hon. members of this house have been, this afternoon by the statement by the Prime Minister which carries us far beyond last September to the point where he asserts in the clearest terms that the members of this house should know what powers are being conferred and what powers can be exercised by the government.

I urge the government when it brings in this bill to state that the time is now, that it is going to act, and that by positive action we will restore confidence in our economy, confidence in the Canadian dollar and make it possible once again for the business people of this country to make firm quotations so that the government may be able to make satisfactory contracts for the production of those things which are so necessary for the defence of freedom.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, apparently there is on this side of the house a warm welcome for the measure which is foreshadowed in the speech of the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). However, I am sure that many were rather disturbed when he said that he hoped it might not have to be used. Looking back over the last few years we have seen year by year since controls and subsidies were removed an ever-rising cost in the living of the people of Canada. We are now faced with a situation in which the government itself is going to spend enormous sums of money which will put in short supply some materials needed for consumer goods. With the government in competition with the individual consumers prices undoubtedly will be forced still higher unless effective steps are taken to prevent it.

I think the government is wise in not relying on the War Measures Act. I agree with what the Prime Minister said in that regard, and also with what the leader of the

opposition (Mr. Drew) said. It is much preferable that at this time the government should introduce a bill which we can discuss and which will give them the specific powers that they require to deal with the situation as it now exists or as they apprehend it may exist.

Like the Prime Minister I hope that we are not embarking upon a course which will lead to a third world war. I hope that sanity will prevail among all nations. I hope that the Soviet union and its satellites will realize that if they bring our civilization down about our ears, theirs will crumble with it. Since they are less able to produce the supplies that go into modern war, their defeat is inevitable. I hope that that will prevent the onset of a new world war.

The Prime Minister remarked that certain labour organizations representing some one million workers had presented a brief to the government this morning. I was not aware of that until I heard the Prime Minister refer to it, when I immediately sent out to secure a copy. From what the Prime Minister said I was not aware that the brief was based entirely on the question we are now discussing, that of controls. Having had it in my hands for just a little while I have been unable to make an analysis, but I do notice that it warmly supports the point of view that we put forward in the house a week ago when we were discussing controls, and also some expressions of opinion that the leader of the opposition made this afternoon regarding the present economic situation.

May I say to the leader of the opposition while I think of it that we are not discussing this matter at the moment from any theoretical point of view. It is true we believe that there must be a larger measure of planning in the interests of society than we have had in the past. I noted with a great deal of interest this afternoon that the leader of the opposition admitted that the kind of economy in which we are living, the so-called free enterprise system to which many persons give allegiance, sometimes results in a certain measure of licence to those powerful organizations that we refer to as being monopolistic in character.

I am not this afternoon, nor have I in the last several years, as the records of *Hansard* will show, basing the contention that we should continue beneficial controls and subsidies on any theoretical or doctrinaire basis. Experience in the past few years surely has brought home to us the need for the protection of society against undue profiteering and undue pushing up of prices such as we have seen during the past few years and which