

Emergency Powers Act

but if we refuse to use our most important weapon, then we are almost certain to fail.

I conclude by once again saying that this resolution is no answer to "inflation now". We will vote for it. Nevertheless we would like to hear the government say, specifically: "We want these powers, we need these powers. If you will give them to us, we will use them".

Mr. J. W. Noseworthy (York South): Mr. Speaker, like other hon. members who have spoken in this debate I have no choice but to support this resolution. A bill will be based upon this resolution, but of course we know nothing about its contents at the present time. Anything that we say regarding the nature of the proposed legislation must be based upon suggestions which have been thrown out by ministers and by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) in his speech this afternoon. We have heard that the bill to be brought in following this resolution will be stand-by legislation which will not be used at the present time. The Prime Minister expressed the hope that the presence of the legislation on the statute books would in itself be sufficient to halt rising prices and inflation and render the application or implementation of the provisions of the bill unnecessary.

The Prime Minister admitted that inflation is one of the weapons which our enemy is using and will continue to use in the cold war, but he intimates that the government hesitates to take any definite action on this matter, particularly in the way of price control. Why is it that those men who gave such excellent service to the country and did such an efficient job during the last war in administering price control are now deprecating price control, are now pointing out all the difficulties in the way of price control and telling us that price control will not work now as it worked during that war? Why is it the ministers who were for four years shouting from the housetops the benefits of price control have suddenly changed their minds and are now afraid to touch price control? The Prime Minister told us this afternoon that there was no desire on the part of the government to by-pass parliament. He intimated that any measure of control would require public support in order to be a success. Why do the Prime Minister and the government think that they will not have public support in the administration of a price control policy at this time?

I have a feeling that if members of this house who sit on the government benches were free to express their opinions and the opinions of their constituents they would

[Mr. Thatcher.]

express themselves as being in favour of price control at this time. How does it happen that there is almost unanimity among the opposition groups that the emergency we are in today demands price control, while practically everybody on the government side of the house is opposed to price control? I say again that if government members and those sitting on the government benches were free to express their candid opinions on this subject they would now speak in favour of price controls. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) told us that representatives of one million workers in this country have asked for price control, and these same representatives assured him that the workers of Canada would support the government in any measure of price control. What is the government afraid of? I listened with a good deal of interest to the speech of my neighbour, the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming). I really thought we had pushed the Conservatives off the price control fence, and that they had come down on the side of price controls. I must say that anyone reading the speech made a little while ago by the hon. member for Eglinton would find it very difficult to decide whether he is in favour of or against price controls at this time.

Mr. Knowles: His leader had better take him in hand.

Mr. Noseworthy: He did an excellent job of balancing himself on that fence, but what I did not like was the insinuation in his speech that only he and his leader were really conscious of and awake to the present emergency. The insinuation was that nobody else was really conscious of the seriousness of the present situation, and that, because we had not followed the advice which he and his leader had given us.

The people of Canada are conscious of the emergency; they are awake. The Prime Minister assured us this afternoon that the representatives of labour gave evidence of their consciousness of the threat of communism in Canada. In a recent poll 75 per cent of the people who were questioned expressed themselves in favour of price controls. Who is it who is opposed to price controls? Who is it that the government is afraid of?

Mr. Knowles: Itself.

Mr. Noseworthy: Who is it who will not give support to a government policy of price control? There were some groups mentioned in the report of the royal commission on prices who were referred to as monopolies and near monopolies. I can understand that probably some of them are opposed to price