

Defence Production Act

I think the minister realized this to some extent when he was moving the second reading of the bill on March 2, 1951, because he is reported at page 836 of *Hansard* of that day as having said:

It is proposed that the act would expire on July 31, 1956.

I believe this has been quoted before.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, how many times does the same paragraph have to be read in order to constitute repetition? I have kept track, and this is the eleventh time in this debate.

Mr. Montgomery: I will not quote it if that will make the minister feel any better.

Mr. Dickey: Read it; it will take up some time.

An hon. Member: Time killing.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): We will forgive the hon. member if he is three minutes short.

Mr. Montgomery: Sometimes I have to talk a little longer in order to get my ideas over, and I hope hon. members will forgive me. That particular passage has been quoted so many times that I think every hon. member knows, and I think the minister knows, that when he introduced this legislation the minister made it quite clear that there was a good reason for not making it permanent. That is the principle behind this, that these powers should not be made permanent.

What has happened? That question has been asked before, but it comes to my mind again. What has happened that has changed the minds of the minister and the government? If there are reasons and they are stated clearly, as the Prime Minister stated the reasons for maintaining the department, perhaps we could be convinced. At least if there are good reasons for keeping and extending these powers at the present time I certainly could go along with that. But what bothers me is that we are handed a bundle of legislation. How are you going to distinguish it? Some of it you are quite happy with and some of it you are most unhappy with. Is it being put up to us this way so that if we vote against it we have to vote against it all, or vote for it all?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): It does not matter.

Mr. Montgomery: There is only one thing I can say; it is disappointing to me. I will have to choose the least serious of two courses and vote against it. This matter has been discussed before, and the minister came back with this bill without any amendments. If I should vote for this in the hope that we would get amendments afterward I am afraid I would be left holding the bag, so to speak.

We certainly would be disappointed. I think the only honest thing a person can do will be to vote against it. The only thing I can do is vote against this, at the same time feeling that the minister will get what he wants. I want to help the minister to carry out his work, but I have to vote against this bill to express my opposition to the other part of the act in which I cannot concur.

I do not think there is much more I can think of right now. It has been said this afternoon that this legislation is to control profits. Several excuses were given by the hon. member for Rosthern, that would lead me to think they have a different viewpoint on this from mine. As I see these powers, they are purely to give the minister the power to make industries do what he wants done when they refuse to co-operate. But so far I have not heard any evidence, nor have we been given any information, that in the last few years any industry has refused to co-operate with the Department of Defence Production. If we were given reasons and asked to support an extension for the time being that would be a far different thing from asking us just to repeal section 41 and make the whole parcel the permanent law of the land. I think, in all fairness, that we deserve either a full explanation—

Mr. Fleming: From the Prime Minister.

Mr. Montgomery:—from the Prime Minister or from the minister whose responsibility it is to operate this department. The main thing is a question of principle. I gather from what the minister has said that he feels the time will come when the government may dissolve the whole thing but, after all, once this gets on the statute books permanently, is it not dangerous?

Unlike some other hon. members, I have not been here very long. I am not worrying in the least about the present minister getting along with or without these powers. I am satisfied that the present Minister of Defence Production can get along very well without these powers. I would not worry about procurement for our defence program, as long as the present minister is in charge of it, if there were none of these powers. What bothers me is that he wants to lead us to believe that he has to have these powers in order to do this job. I do not believe that. He can do it without these powers. He has been doing it for all these years. He had educated industry in this country so well that they are anxious to do business with him. Our program of continuing defence is not the emergency it was in 1951. Our