

Defence Production Act

to assume responsibilities for the expenditure of \$30 million that might not produce results. Is this minister the first minister who has ever been committed to the extent of \$30 million? Has the minister of defence in Britain never been committed to an expenditure of \$30 million?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): He has an act.

Mr. Drew: He has an act, but he has not an act of this kind. It was drafted by somebody with some sense of responsibility. Nor has the minister of defence production, in a country where they are spending more than any other free country, any such loose and undefined powers as those conferred upon the minister by this act. The minister has told us that under the act in the United States and under the act in the United Kingdom they have greater powers. That is nonsense; pure, unadulterated nonsense.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): You are talking nonsense.

Mr. Drew: If the minister is able to interpret this act in that way he is misleading the house. If the minister does not know that, then he should consult with legal advisers and get a better interpretation of the act.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): I advise you to do the same.

Mr. Drew: An understanding of this act on the part of the minister is long overdue. One of the reasons many of us wanted to hear the Prime Minister was that the Prime Minister is a lawyer and knows quite well that the statement given to this house in regard to the comparative position of these acts is not correct. We wanted to hear from the Prime Minister why the house is to be left in ignorance, so far as the government is concerned, of what is the real effect of this act. No, Mr. Speaker; before any hon. member charges that there has been exaggeration let him show that we have exaggerated in any way what could be done under this act.

Do not think it is only members of this party who are talking about the issues that are involved. I see, for instance, a heading, "Supremacy of parliament at stake"; that is from the *Sydney Post-Record*. Then I see a statement such as this heading of an editorial, "Principle bad in defence production bill"; that is from the *London Free Press*. You can go right across the country and see responsible newspapers expressing their opinion in regard to the application of this act.

Why try to have this dealt with upon any basis other than the merits of the legislation

itself? Of course we do have different ideas expressed. You know, there has been a wonderful change come over the socialists since this matter first came before the house. When the resolution first came before the house they also questioned this measure, but now they embrace it with wide open arms. There is not one of the members opposite who shouts, "Good old C.D." louder than the socialists do at this stage. Why has the change occurred? Today we heard from the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Zaplitny), who indulged in self-righteous indignation and criticism of the members of this party who were not prepared to entrust the whole future of the country to the Minister of Defence Production.

Oh, how times have changed. Just let me read what the hon. member for Dauphin said on March 11. This really takes the cake. I quote from page 1973 of *Hansard*, and it is the hon. member for Dauphin speaking, the member who chastised us this afternoon for not having unbounded faith in the omniscience of the Minister of Defence Production. This, of course, was at the resolution stage of the bill, when we had been suggesting that these powers be reviewed. This is what the member for Dauphin said then:

May I say that I am always interested in hearing the hon. member for Greenwood. I admire his style greatly, and I believe he speaks with more humility than is necessary with respect to his ability. I sometimes wonder whether he does not give too much credit for omnipotence to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. I was so interested in what he had to say tonight that I looked up some Shakespeare and found it very apt in connection with his words. For example, there is the place where Cassius said:
"Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,
That he is grown so great?"

Oh, how they have changed. Then he went on:

Perhaps even more apt is the beginning of the passage where he said:
"Why, man, he doth bstride the narrow world
Like a Colossus; and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves."

Oh, how they have changed. And going on with the hon. member for Dauphin:

I am sure that while the minister was speaking there was another thought running through his mind, probably expressed in these words which Caesar said:
"Let me have men about me that are fat;
Sleek-headed men and such as sleep o' nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous."

Mr. Rowe: He must have got frightened.

Mr. Drew: What has happened to the hon. member for Dauphin?

Mr. Fleming: He got lean and hungry, I guess.