

*Defence Production Act*

In concluding I would say that this particular viewpoint professes to have a strange faith in the capacity and ability of politicians. The captains of industry, responsible citizens of this country, are bloodthirsty men who it would seem have no interest in the welfare of the country or of our free political institutions. They cannot be trusted in a time of emergency to come to the aid of those values which underline our way of life.

On the other hand this mystical belief or faith in the ability and integrity of the politician implies that the captain of politics would be all-wise, all-benevolent, all-righteous and could be completely trusted in handling the affairs of production. That is far from the true situation as is to be found in the pages of history. The individuals we should be most suspicious of are the politicians, and that is the reason we have opposition to governments; that is the reason why we have the diffusion and division of power, to prevent a government becoming too powerful and being placed in a position where it can abuse its power.

After all the captain of politics, just as the captain of industry, is subject to all the human frailties that have dogged the footsteps of man down through the pages of history. Perhaps I can express this viewpoint best by quoting a little piece of poetry I heard some time ago which described a politician. It went something like this:

He would not kiss the babies as he went along  
the way,  
He believed that public business should no more  
than others pay,  
He insisted on insisting on economy in fact,  
Which for any politician is a curious way to act.  
He said I made a promise to the people in this  
town  
If they voted me in office I would keep the taxes  
down.  
So I mean to keep that promise, and he fired a  
dozen clerks  
Saying one is all that's needed if he's honest and  
he works.  
He refused to pose for pictures just to further  
spread his fame,  
On every public project he refused to splash his  
name.  
He was early at the office and on the job he  
stayed,  
He respected all the citizens but no favourites he  
played.  
He tried running public business in a private  
tradesman's way,  
But the things they said about him filled his family  
with dismay.  
He was honest, he was earnest, he was truthful and  
sincere,  
But he was no politician so he didn't last a year.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Mr. Speaker, is this doggerel pertinent to the Defence Production Act?

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I must advise him that his time has expired.

**Mr. Dinsdale:** I lost 15 minutes in the discussion.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** That would appear to cast some reflection on the timing. My experience has been that the officials at the table are most accurate in that respect. I may advise the hon. member that allowance was made for the interruptions on the point of order.

**Mr. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I think it unlikely I will run over the time, though there are only 20 minutes left. I propose to speak without tedious repetition if that can be avoided, and I hope to present one or two new phases in this debate.

We are dealing with Bill No. 256—I appreciate that this has been said before—to amend the Defence Production Act. It has been said that this is a simple bill containing only two sections. The explanatory notes point out that with regard to the first section the only change is the substitution of the word “fifteen” for the word “ten”. The second clause reads:

Section 41 of the said act is repealed.

What could be simpler than to increase the salary of the minister and keep the act in force after July 31 of next year? All that is required is for the house to pass this simple little bill in a few minutes and then proceed to other business. Well, there is more to it than that. A real problem has been presented in this relatively simple enactment, and that is continuing all the Defence Production Act operation except section 41. Further than that, the core of the matter is that the intention here is to make the act permanent.

As I followed the minister's argument in the early stages of the debate, he stressed the point that there was a continuing emergency, and various hon. members have dwelt upon that during the course of the debate. The meaning the Oxford dictionary gives to “emergency” is as follows: “Sudden juncture demanding immediate action”. I think it is important to keep that definition in mind. We are tending to use the word “emergency” with a much wider meaning than that. There is nothing at the present time that indicates a sudden juncture demanding immediate action. As I say, the minister, in the course of his early argument, based it on what he called a continuing emergency, and he stressed the fact that a permanent department was essential in order to retain experienced employees.