

Combines Investigation Act

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I do not understand the question.

Mr. Garson: Why does my hon. friend quote something he disagrees with?

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I do not always just quote the things I agree with. I believe in telling what other people think as well as myself. I do not understand the question.

Mr. MacInnis: I think the Minister of Justice is asking why the hon. member is drawing attention to the fact that the government broke the law when he disagrees with it.

Mr. Howe: No, no.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Perhaps the minister will explain later what he means.

I want to come now to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, because his part in all this is quite interesting. We could call him the villain of the piece, but if the minister regards that as objectionable, we will call him the hero of the piece.

The minister treated this statute as though it were non-existent; but we need not be surprised at the Minister of Trade and Commerce doing that. We all have great respect for the Minister of Trade and Commerce when he operates in his proper line. We all respect the things he did during the war, and we do not think that all the things he has done since the war are wrong—only a percentage of them.

But let us have no illusions about the attitude of the Minister of Trade and Commerce toward this house. He has made it quite clear. First of all he has said that he did not know what the opposition is for, and in saying that I think he expressed his exact feeling. I do not think he does know what the opposition is for, because the minister does not really believe in his heart that the minority should have that chance to express itself which is the glory of our parliamentary system. The opposition is given a chance again and again. The minister really is a man who likes to live in a world where he can say unto one, "Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh". The minister is an authoritarian. If the minister will not object to my saying it, I would say that he is a fascist, a nice fascist, who by chance has got into a democratic assembly.

Mr. Howe: Now that the hon. member has said it, perhaps he had better withdraw it.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I shall make any withdrawal the minister wishes, because I do not want to say anything that is in the least offensive to him.

Mr. Garson: Say it and withdraw it.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Well, I shall describe the minister as an authoritarian whose mind inclines to a dictatorship form of government. I think the minister clearly indicated that when he said that he did not know what the opposition was for. Indeed I am surprised that the minister questioned what I said, because I thought he would agree with it—not only agree with it, but probably almost boast of it. As I say, we must not complain that the Minister of Trade and Commerce was not worried about breaking the law, because I think he regards the cabinet as a body which goes ahead and does pretty well what it likes and then comes here occasionally and tells us what it is doing. We just have to go on with that as well as we can.

It would not matter so much that we have a Minister of Trade and Commerce who does not understand the processes of democracy, but what really does matter, so far as we can see, is that he is leading this government around by the nose. That is the only thing you can take out of this debate; that is the only thing you can take out of the resolution we had yesterday, which came after the pleasant threat the minister made the other night. The minister does not threaten much; he threatens only when he thinks it is necessary to get his way. I suppose we should be grateful to him for threatening us no more than he does.

Coming back to this legislation, it is interesting to note that all those who have taken part in its preparation were just wasting their time. I think the former prime minister had a good deal to do with this legislation, but he was just wasting his time. When it comes to the point, the legislation which has to do with publication is disregarded.

Now let us look for a moment at this section. I can imagine a section so technical and narrow, and dealing with something so trivial, that the government might well have some justification for saying they would disregard it. Let us assume, for example, that the section provided for publication in one way and the minister decided that publication should be carried out in another way. I think we would have said that did not matter much. But what about this section? Is it trivial? Let me just recall to your minds one thing which has been brought to the attention of the house already; I refer to a remark made in this house by the previous prime minister, when he pointed out—and I think with great truth—that the publicity requirement here was one of the very cornerstones of the act. His words, as I remember them, were that publicity can often be more valuable than penalty. How true that is; yet this