

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

to the old cry, "Let us save the constitution." The cry of conscription was stale, so they had to resort to the cry, "Let us save the constitution."

For days, Mr. Speaker, this government has been assaulted and, by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Woodsworth) the Conservative leader has been compared with Lenin, while another eminent hon. member has compared him with Mussolini. Finally, however, at the last session of parliament, the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act of 1931 became law because it was necessary in the public interest as the only means to face the emergency. When it was adopted the election was in full swing in Three Rivers-St. Maurice, and the Liberal party decided to lead the attack on the government on that very question. The hon. member for Quebec East (Mr. Lapointe) and the hon. member for St. James (Mr. Rinfret) went there and denounced the so-called "blank cheque" legislation and the so-called "despotism" of our leader. A great battle was waged. In the course of his attack the hon. member for Quebec East referred to the French revolution, and gave to the electors of that constituency the first edition of the interesting speech he made in the house a few days ago. On a beautiful Sunday night at Shawinigan Falls he said:

Parliament committed suicide for six months. It does not count for anything. Bennett has established in this country a real dictatorship. He leads by force. He is a true dictator. If Nero at the time of the Roman empire kept the people in misery and gave them bread and circuses to amuse them, Bennett gives them bread but gives it through force.

I quote those words from page 7 of *La Presse*, the great Liberal daily paper of Montreal, of Monday, August 3. A few minutes afterwards the hon. member added, speaking of the government and of Conservatives:

They capitalize the sufferings of the people. The Tories are only the members of depression, the offspring of the crisis which is passing over the country.

These are samples of some of the mild expressions that were used by the hon. members opposite when attacking the government during the by-election at Three Rivers-St. Maurice. A very interesting speech was also made by the former Secretary of State, the hon. member for St. James. Explaining what was meant by the words "peace, order and good government" in the bill, he stated to the crowd that those words meant that Mr. Bennett wanted to impose that bill on parliament in order to revive conscription. He also stated that every attempt would be made by the government to curb the liberties of the

[Mr. Gagnon.]

people. But the humble Conservative members of this house, guided by their ministers from Quebec, went into the constituency and ventured to explain to the people the real purpose of the legislation, that it was presented to the house in order to give bread to the poor and the needy during the depression. They also stated in their humble way that the government was doing its very best to redeem its pledges, and that the Prime Minister had resorted to the legislation reluctantly because he deemed it was the only way to face the emergency.

The hon. members of the opposition, Mr. Speaker, were much more violent in Three Rivers than they have been in this house, but nevertheless the constituency of Three Rivers-St. Maurice, which for more than thirty years had never elected a Conservative, chose for its worthy representative an eminent lawyer who at one time had been the *batonnier* of the bar of this province, a true Conservative—my friend Mr. Charles Bourgeois. In that instance the province of Quebec gave parliament and this country unmistakable evidence of its good judgment and its political sagacity. It expressed its willingness to cooperate with the English-speaking people of the other provinces in order to solve the pressing problems which confront the government. The province also gave the Prime Minister testimony of its admiration and gratitude for the strenuous work he has been carrying on to save Canada from bankruptcy. The county of Three Rivers-St. Maurice expressed the real mind of Quebec, which hon. members—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. GAGNON: —which hon. members opposite do not seem able to understand. The province of Quebec has always been ready to respond to any expressions of good will, and *bonne entente*. The province of Quebec has been deaf to the cry of conscription and despotism. The people of Quebec do not believe in appeals to passion and prejudice. The county of Three Rivers-St. Maurice gave a vote of confidence to the Prime Minister which did certainly console him for the base accusations that were heaped upon him by many members of the opposite party, and especially by the former Secretary of State (Mr. Rinfret) when he stated that the Prime Minister in his capacity of Minister of Finance proposed to amend the income tax in order to de-tax himself and his multi-millionaire friends thereby increasing the burdens on the shoulders of the poor.

Since the Three Rivers-St. Maurice by-election the Conservative party has done its