

Navigable Waters Protection Act

Since when has it been a crime to seek employment? Since when has it been decided that we shall have on our statute books laws making provision for the imposition of penalties of \$500 or imprisonment for three months, or both, for the seeking of employment? There may be a case to be made for screening, which would result in certain people being denied the right to obtain certain employment. And even that would need to be gone into. Other hon. members, including the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew), have done so.

But surely there should not be attached to provisions referring to the seeking of employment the right of the government to impose a penalty of \$500, or three months' imprisonment, or both fine and imprisonment. I suggest that this is going just a little too far. I do not need to repeat the arguments which have been made by the Leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. MacInnis), the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton), the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett), the hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Low) and others. Surely we should look at this in its proper perspective, and realize that the government is asking, under the pretext of this legislation, for much wider powers than it has any right to have, or to ask parliament to give it.

I plead very strongly and earnestly with the government to reconsider this whole matter. The third part of the bill deals with a subject matter entirely different from the scope of the bill. Like some other measures, it came from the other place, and was dealt with first over there. It was presented to us this morning, not by the Minister of Justice, who should be dealing with matters involving crime and punishment, not by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg), who has been responsible in the past for the administration of great lakes seamen's regulations, but by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transport. Even if it had been the Minister of Transport (Mr. Chevrier) I do not think it would have been proper. But the fact that it did have all these other involvements has meant that the Minister of Justice and the Minister of Labour have felt that they should participate in this debate.

Mr. Speaker, this parliament is being faced with altogether too much of this kind of legislation. We have too many requests of this kind in which parliament is asked to turn over its rights and powers, and all kinds of authority, to the government. I wonder when the day will come when the government will bring in a bill in which it will ask parliament to give to the government the power to do anything it pleases when parliament is not sitting—whereupon it would probably move that parliament be adjourned.

[Mr. Knowles.]

In my opinion this legislation goes too far. There is far too much gall in the third part of it, and we shall oppose this bill.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) for having given me credit for stating my views. I must point out to him however that, while I did rise to my feet on one or two occasions, someone beat me to it. Nevertheless there is something I should like to say.

Mr. Knowles: I must have been reading the hon. member's mind. I did see him on his feet.

Mr. Low: The fact is that I have been giving this whole matter the most earnest consideration and attention. Certain thoughts have been running through my mind as I have listened to the debate, and considered the points made by all hon. members, from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) until the present time.

In the first place, we have no Emergency Powers Act now. Whether that is because hon. members in the opposition have spoken so continuously against it, I cannot say. The fact remains that the government does not have the Emergency Powers Act to fall back upon today.

Then, secondly, everyone knows that today, while we may not have a state of emergency, in reality this is a time of great danger; and certainly the government must have ample authority to meet the dangers that beset us. No one can deny that the government does require perhaps unusual authority to deal with the dangers that beset our country. I would not be averse to giving it ample power to prevent any possible acts of sabotage, or any danger of that kind. I am not so greatly concerned about the matter of giving power to the government. Let us give them all the power they need to deal with the situation realistically and firmly. But I think hon. members who have spoken thus far have made a good case. Certainly we do not want to be parties to giving them powers we do not know about, or that they can extend into greater powers we are not thinking about at the present time.

I believe that is the crux of the whole situation. I should think the government could bring before us an amended section 34 of the Navigable Waters Protection Act spelling out in more or less detail exactly what it requires. I do not think any of us would have any hesitation in giving the government the powers it requires, even to the extent of screening workmen to a point where the government might deny to even more