

Defence Production Act

That seems to be the basis of the argument of all the other parties in the house.

Mr. Hansell: I do not contemplate that this government is going on forever. As a matter of fact, if I did contemplate that it would mean I would be banging my head against a brick wall because—

Mr. Knowles: You are.

Mr. Hansell: —I am out to defeat this government.

An hon. Member: That is the brick wall.

Mr. Hansell: I am pleased to say that here and there we are meeting with some reasonable and satisfactory success, but that is not the point. The point is that the minister is asking for these powers forever. The minister may not be here in a few years' time; I do not know.

Mr. Murphy (Lambton West): Whom are you going to ask?

Mr. Hansell: Somebody will be succeeding the minister and that is what I had in mind in objecting to these wide powers being granted. I think we will all agree that the minister has done a good job.

Mr. Murphy (Lambton West): Don't speak for all of us.

Mr. Hansell: He did a good job during the war and he is doing a good job now. We are not talking against the minister and his efficiency when we oppose this measure, not by any means. Writing this into the bill means that these powers will go to his successor, and we do not know who that will be. It may be someone completely unable to perform the same functions as the minister, but he will have these powers just the same. I do not know, but it could be that business generally in this country has some confidence in the minister. I hope it has. But there is no reason to say that business will have the same confidence in his successor.

Mr. Ellis: I thought you were arguing on the basis of principle.

Mr. Hansell: Therefore we are saying that the concentration of power in the hands of one man, written into the act in perpetuity, is a wrong and evil thing. We are opposed to the bill now presented to us because it calls for the deletion of section 41, which would bring this act before parliament in a year's time. As my leader said, we are prepared to give the minister the powers at present. We are willing to vote for the bill if section 41 is not repealed, but we are not willing to vote for this package bill which gives the minister these powers forever.

[Mr. Howe (Port Arthur).]

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I find it remarkable that we should be having this extended discussion on this subject tonight in the Canadian House of Commons. As I read the act under discussion tonight, one part of that piece of legislation is designed to perpetuate wartime powers in peacetime. As I have listened to the remarks of hon. members on this matter, the only complaint they have raised concerning the legislation is on the part of the act which is designed to perpetuate these unlimited powers that have grown up during wartime emergencies, particularly during the emergency of world war II and the recent Korean crisis.

I say it is remarkable that we should have to take time to re-emphasize this point, because in a free parliament in Canada the dangers involved should be obvious. One good result emerging from the extended discussion is that it reveals the state of mind and soul of the Liberal majority, and reveals in particular the degree to which the doctrine of statism has crept into that party. We have listened to many members of the opposition make their contribution. We have heard very few representatives of the government in this discussion. In most cases the spokesmen on behalf of the government have tended to minimize the dangers that have been raised by members of the opposition, and actually we have had very few serious contributions to the discussion from that side of the house.

Mr. Murphy (Lambton West): What would you expect?

Mr. Dinsdale: It is bad enough, of course, Mr. Speaker, when we have government supporters ignoring the complaints, the accusations and the criticisms that are being levelled at certain aspects of this measure by members of the opposition, but it is infinitely worse when the same criticisms are ignored by the leaders of that group. I hope we might hear from the Prime Minister himself before this debate concludes, because the legislation stands in his name. I hope to demonstrate in the contribution I shall make to this discussion that the matter is of such importance that it demands a statement and an explanation from the right hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: May I interrupt the hon. member? I have been glancing through the debate right from the beginning. As I had occasion to say previously—see *Debates*, May 24, 1955, pages 4063-5—whenever debates are extended over a long period we come to a point when arguments are often being repeated. Just as the hon. member is embarking upon the