

*Defence Production Act*

way in which legislation can be examined critically, the way in which it can be determined whether or not it meets the needs and conditions of the times.

Farther along, I find this:

Before the resolution on the present bill was concurred in on March 14, I gave an undertaking that the government would consider the request made by the hon. members for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green) and Peace River (Mr. Low). This request was to include in the act a clause which would make the powers of the department subject to review within a reasonable period.

This question was referred to the Department of Justice, and officers of that department pointed out that in view of the fact that a review of legislation is a matter which parliament can undertake at any time, an express provision requiring a periodic review of this kind would have no real significance. In order to require a review by parliament and attach to it legal consequences it would be necessary, for example, to provide that the act would expire at a stated time unless reviewed and reapproved or re-enacted before the expiration of that time. This obviously was not the intent indicated by the request put forward by the hon. members.

Now, reference is made there to the request to include in the act a clause which would make the powers of the department subject to review within a reasonable period. I am not a lawyer, perhaps I am not even an intelligent layman, but for the life of me I cannot see why the Department of Defence Production could not be put on a permanent basis and these extreme powers be granted for a limited period. I am not saying there should not be a Department of Defence Production. I agree that there should be such a department, but these extreme powers should not be continued on a permanent basis but should be renewed periodically by this parliament if they are necessary.

There is another thing that really puzzles me. It is the first time since I have been a member of this parliament that an important government bill has been up for discussion and we have not heard from at least the senior cabinet ministers. For instance, we have not heard from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin); the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson); the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Campney); the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris); the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner); the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann); the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson), or the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg). I stop there because they are the senior ministers in the front row. We have not heard from one of them in support of this bill during this debate. It is the first time I have had the experience of witnessing that, in the 17 years I have been a member of this house.

Has the government attempted to give any reason why this bill could not be brought up

next session in January, February, March, April, May or June? I see the Minister of National Health and Welfare with a broad smile on his face.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** What is the trouble with July?

**Mr. Lennard:** I beg your pardon?

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** You did not mention July.

**Mr. Lennard:** This act expires in July, does it not?

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Yes.

**Mr. Lennard:** That would be running it rather close, and I believe the minister would think so, too.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** I mean this July.

**Mr. Lennard:** Well, we might run over into August because I do not see any finish to this thing just yet. If there is some valid, hidden reason for bringing it up now the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) ought to say what that reason is. Has parliament become incompetent to exercise a periodic review of the powers here delegated?

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would say this. Why in the world should not the minister be willing to submit periodically to parliament his claim for a renewal of powers? As the opposition has pointed out time and again, it is the power of parliament that is at stake. A permanent right to appoint controllers, to operate business, and to requisition defence supplies is repugnant to all our history. We did not withhold these powers in world war I; we did not withhold them in world war II; we did not withhold them in the Korean crisis. But we do object to having our industrial system copper-riveted under unlimited delegated powers of government. Parliament is threatened by the dictates of a huge complacent majority. If the opposition bows to this challenge it will mean not only the weakening of parliament as an institution, but the weakening of the will of the Canadian people.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that I was prompted to speak this afternoon because, as I mentioned, I have had so much pressure put on me by the people of my home town and riding that I felt it my duty to express the views of so many living in that district.

**Mr. G. K. Fraser (Peterborough):** Mr. Speaker, I am taking part in this filibuster. Like the hon. member for Wentworth (Mr. Lennard), the filibuster has caught up with me, also.

I do not like making long speeches—