

to state the position of the Government with regard to the Bill, he contented himself with simply saying that this Government thought it was not in the public interest that the Act should remain upon the Statute Book. Accordingly, this Bill was passed by the House of Commons without division and with virtually no discussion. It would appear that the Government of the day has no intention of proceeding under the Act, and therefore it might as well be repealed.

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN: Honourable members, the consideration which ordinarily should govern the repeal or non-repeal of an Act of Parliament is whether or not that Act is capable of being of public service. I do not think it is worth while, though, to argue now the question of the value of an economic council. There were, perhaps, those who thought it something in the nature of supererogation, but the Commons of last year unanimously, I believe, passed the measure sponsored by the Government of that time, and it passed also without opposition in this House. For myself, I think a thoroughly well selected body of men who made their life work a study of economic questions, men of the stamp of Maynard Keynes, of England, if we had them in this country, might be, and certainly ought to be, of immense value to us.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: But if the Government of the day do not want the measure, I certainly am not going to be a party to forcing it upon them. It is, to my mind, not only conceivable but probable that an economic council would be of use if selected by a Government who believed in the institution they were establishing; but it is utterly beyond common sense to suggest it could be of any value if appointed by a Government who had no faith in it and did not think it could serve this country. Therefore I do not oppose the repeal of the Act. Indeed, the line of reasoning I am adopting is just that advanced by the honourable senator from North York (Hon. Sir Allen Aylesworth).

But I do call attention to something that appears to me as extraordinary. I do not like this House being addressed as if it really had meagre intelligence, and in that very fashion it is addressed in the explanations vouchsafed to us on the second page of this measure:

The purpose of this Bill is to repeal The Economic Council of Canada Act, 1935, for the following reasons:—

Now, will the House mark the reasons why the Act is to be repealed?

(a) The Governor in Council has not deemed necessary or expedient to appoint any members to form an economic council.

Not that the Governor in Council thinks an economic council would not be of any use; but that the Governor in Council has not done anything. In paragraph (b) we are told:

(b) According to section twelve thereof, the said Act is inoperative if moneys are not appropriated by Parliament for the purposes of the council; and whereas the provision for an expenditure of \$20,000 appeared as item 412 in the schedule of The Appropriation Act, No. 6, 1935, said provision has been left out of the Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1937.

So we are asked to repeal the measure, not because it is not a good measure, but because no money has been voted to sustain and operate it. Surely we are entitled to an explanation which suggests a little better estimate of our intelligence than what is indicated here. I know the honourable leader of the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) is not responsible for the explanatory notes, but it is utter nonsense to address them to a deliberative assembly.

As stated by the honourable member from North York, it would be absurd to have legislation remain on the Statute Book if the Government of the day do not believe in it, and evidently they do not. Therefore I do not oppose the present Bill. But I should have liked the Government to tell us why they do not believe in the legislation now sought to be repealed, especially in view of the fact that when it was being enacted members of the present Administration supported it.

Hon. RAOUL DANDURAND: My right honourable friend suggests that the Government should have given its reasons for the repeal of that legislation. But the Government took no action in the matter: the Bill before us comes from a private member of the House of Commons. As the honourable gentleman from North York (Hon. Sir Allen Aylesworth) has said, the Prime Minister was asked what was the opinion of the Government with respect to the measure, and he answered that as he had his own Council to advise him, and had at his elbow all the experts in the departments, he did not deem it proper to appoint an economic council. I make this statement simply to free myself and the Government of responsibility for the statement which appears on the page opposite the Bill.

The situation confronting us reminds me of a statement made by Mr. Joseph Chamberlain to the late Sir George Ross, who was