

Emergency Powers Act

This type of legislation cannot be justified in times like this. How can the government take the stand now that there is such an emergency as will justify control over all business; all agriculture; every transportation system, air, land and water; all trade, exportation, importation, production and manufacture? Why ask for those powers? They say they have not used them or that they have used them only five times, once over a five-cent piece. I seem to remember a time when a five-cent piece had a tremendous effect. But surely at no time was it necessary to have a statute passed abdicating parliament in order to provide for the nickel content of a five-cent piece.

Mr. Garson: Three of them were revocations.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Two of them are revocations. Is there any need for granting such power to revoke an order in council passed under extraordinary powers? Two are revocations; one is as to a nickel and the other two could have been legislated upon. Surely after seven years following the war there is no necessity once more to confer upon this government absolute power. As far as I am concerned—and I am pleased with the general united front of the opposition—we believe that the Canadian people should know the dangers of such legislation. If this government continues its avid and greedy search for power, we intend to do everything we can to assure that they shall know that absolute power will not be conferred on a government, however benevolent it describes itself to be, however benign and however omniscient.

Mr. Garson: Before my hon. friend takes his seat, will he permit a question?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Surely.

Mr. Garson: May I ask the hon. member this question: If this statute as he has described it in such eloquent language is so bad, why did not his party vote against it in 1951? And why did they not vote against its extension in 1952?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Apparently information of a dependable character will not satisfy my hon. friend. He asks the question as a sort of rigmarole. He asked the question of the hon. member for Eglinton and he got his answer. He asked it of the Leader of the Opposition and he got his answer. I can give him my answer.

Mr. Garson: Perhaps you can do it now. We have not had an answer yet.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Do you think you can ever be satisfied with an answer? As a matter

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

of fact, let me say this—and I am making it perfectly clear—that for reasons beyond my control, and about which the minister knows, I was not here in 1951 and 1952. But the only time I was here I took the stand I have always taken: Freedom—

Mr. Garson: Did you vote against it?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Vote against it?

Mr. Garson: Yes.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I opposed it, on every occasion.

Mr. Garson: But did you vote against it?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, I am sure I voted against it.

Mr. Garson: Well, look up the record and you will find you did not.

Mr. Diefenbaker: "On division" is voting against it, just as clearly as by any other means. I was not here in 1951 or 1952, for reasons which my hon. friend knows.

Mr. Sinclair: But your party was here.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes, and my party took a stand against it.

Mr. Garson: Why did you not vote against it?

Mr. Sinnott: Mr. Chairman, allow me, in a few moments, to give my analysis of the great oratorical speech of the hon. member for Lake Centre, which comprised forty-five minutes.

I have been irritated to the point where I feel I must speak this afternoon. I do this because of some statements that have been made in the house. Before going into that however let me say that I will give the government my support in this legislation they are now attempting to introduce.

Mr. Brooks: I am sure they are wrong, now.

Mr. Sinnott: When the hon. member for Lake Centre was talking about the tone of the Prime Minister, I was wondering if it was half as bad as the tone he was using, or that used by the hon. member for Eglinton, or by the hon. member for Kamloops. I think we have as fine a gentleman as Prime Minister as we have ever known in Canada.

Mr. Fulton: Short-tempered, though.

Mr. Sinnott: It would take a man with a long temper and long patience to stand you very long. When the hon. member for Lake Centre says that these powers have been exercised for the last eight years he should keep in mind that they have been exercised because it has been the will of the Canadian