

*Defence Production Act*

industries that are essential to national defence should not be profit-making industries but should be owned and operated by the people of Canada through crown corporations representing the people of Canada. That is the position we take. But that is not the problem that is under discussion at the present time. What is under discussion at the present time is whether we shall give to the government of this country the right to obtain the necessary raw materials and to direct those raw materials into the channels that will be to the best interests of the Canadian people for the defence of this country. We are prepared to support that proposition although, as I say, it does not go as far as we should like to go in connection with these matters.

I say this to the Minister of Defence Production. If the government would say that at the end of three years or five years this Defence Production Act would be brought back to the house for examination and report, I believe this debate would end. It seems to me such a simple proposition.

I am not suggesting that the ministry or the minister should recede from the position that they want the principle of this bill adopted by the House of Commons at this time. We are prepared to support the adoption of the principle that the Minister of Defence Production and the government itself should have certain powers that are inherent in this legislation. But I should like to see the other safeguard provided, namely that from time to time this house would have the opportunity of reviewing the legislation. A few days ago the Prime Minister went a long way toward meeting that request, when he said that any hon. member in this house could, in a subsequent session, introduce a motion to consider the legislation and bring about changes in it.

While the Prime Minister gave that assurance, there is this to be said. The Prime Minister is an individual, and the Prime Minister may not be here for any considerable length of time. Life is very uncertain. While that pledge has been given by the Prime Minister, it is not enough, I think, to satisfy the desires of most members of the House of Commons. In my opinion, if the government would say that when we reach the committee stage they are prepared to give the house an opportunity of placing in this bill a limitation so that in three years or five years it may be reconsidered, we would be in an entirely different position. Parliament must be supreme.

I want to see the authority of this parliament maintained. Make no mistake about it; I am not one of those who believe that the authority of parliament should be undermined in any particular. I do not think the

[Mr. Coldwell.]

minister believes that. I am certain the government does not believe it either. To argue that the minister or the government does believe that, I think, is to introduce into this debate a very unreal consideration. My view is that on all sides of the house we believe in the supremacy of parliament.

If that is so, then it seems to me there should be no objection to the house having an opportunity to review this legislation, we will say at the end of three or five years. We expect an election in 1957, two years from now, or at the latest in 1958, three years from now, which would be the normal lifetime of this parliament. If these powers were left in the statutes without a review, it would mean that a succeeding government, no matter what its complexion—and I know my hon. friends of the Liberal party are confident that they will be the government after 1957—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Coldwell:** I am not so confident. You never can tell what the electors of a country will do. It is quite possible that they might put on the right side of Mr. Speaker a Conservative or a C.C.F. government. If a Conservative government is put on the right side of Mr. Speaker, what guarantee is there that we would not have the same kind of administration we had under Mr. Borden in 1919 or under Mr. Bennett in 1930? Has the house forgotten that in 1919 Mr. Borden invoked certain powers that were far beyond any powers that any subsequent government has invoked? I have not forgotten that in 1919 a Conservative-dominated government of this country ordered the arrest of certain individuals in the city of Winnipeg, and ordered their deportation because they were British born. They wired the authorities in Winnipeg to arrest and deport them, and subsequently they would introduce legislation to validate that illegal action. That was a union government.

I am not prepared to leave on the statute books of this country legislation which would enable another government of any stripe, I do not care whether it is Conservative, Liberal, C.C.F. or Social Credit, any sort of government, to do the kind of things that Conservative government did in the early 1920's. I might add that subsequently Mr. Woodsworth was elected to this house and Mr. Heaps was elected to this house. It was on Mr. Heaps' motion, of course, that the telegram from Mr. Meighen to Winnipeg was produced in this chamber in 1926. Nor am I forgetful that it was a Conservative government that placed on the statute books section 98 of the Criminal Code, which for years and years this house tried to repeal and ultimately succeeded. I am not forgetting that.