

Defence Production Act

threaten the Canadian people. I contend it is not good psychology to do so. The people of Canada have always done things voluntarily and I believe that if this is left on a voluntary basis the people of Canada will again respond as they have done in the past. They can be trusted. There is no great emergency.

I thoroughly agree with those words, Mr. Speaker. Then as reported at page 5390 of *Hansard* the hon. member for York-Humber (Miss Aitken) said:

Our concern, Mr. Speaker, is not so much the minister himself or even the powers. As we have said again and again, it is the permanency of these powers. The Minister of Defence Production is not infallible. We know he is impatient with the slow pace of parliament. We also know he is nearing the end of his political career and will soon take a well earned rest.

For which I would not blame him.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): You hope.

Mr. Lennard: I often think that I should have my head read for being here. The quotation continues:

What will happen then? We are being asked to give these powers for all time to some man now unknown. No matter who he is, no one man should have such permanent powers in a democracy.

In a speech recently my leader listed these powers in a way that brings out most forcefully the dangers in the Prime Minister's bill to make these extraordinary powers permanent. The Leader of the Opposition said:

"It would give a single minister, without even the formality of an order in council, power to seize any business, large or small; to cancel contracts; to take over any material that the minister thinks could be used in the production of defence requirements; to control professional and other personal services; to manufacture and process any defence supplies; to purchase, sell, rent or otherwise acquire or dispose of any real or personal property which in the opinion of the minister alone is likely to be necessary or desirable for these purposes; and to make loans or advances to any person for the purpose of doing all these things. As if these powers, to be exercised without even consulting the government, let alone parliament, were not enough, the act provides that the minister may 'do all such things as appear to the minister to be incidental to or necessary or expedient' to the carrying out of all these extraordinary powers. In addition to these the minister has power to demand information about any detail of the business of any company or individual capable of producing defence supplies."

When the minister spoke the other day, Mr. Speaker, he said that he had had no complaints from industry over the period of time that these powers had been in force. I might say that I know some instances in which firms would have liked to complain but they felt a bit reticent about doing so. I might draw to the attention of the house something I had to say earlier in this debate, as reported at page 2002 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Lennard: I merely wish to make a brief comment. Earlier this afternoon some mention was made of reluctance on the part of firms to deal with the government and accept government orders. I feel in that respect the government must

[Mr. Lennard.]

accept some of the blame because, to use a common phrase, they have not always been good pay. The government sometimes required weeks and even months before making payment to firms for goods delivered. In some cases during the last world war I know that firms were embarrassed to the extent of being unable to meet their payroll obligations because of reluctance or delay on the part of the government of that day in making payment.

I know that to be a fact because many small firms in my part of the country had experienced those extremely difficult conditions.

While I think of it, Mr. Speaker, there is one thing that I might mention and it is this. Now that the war has been over for some years I hope that the Department of Defence Production have selected a good group of inspectors where inspectors are needed. I know that during the war days, when perhaps some excuses could be made, there were inspectors, especially in the clothing industry, who knew no more about what they were inspecting than I would if I were sent out to judge horses. I happen to have some firsthand knowledge of the textile industry and the inspectors at that time. One inspector in the underwear trade during the war was a broken-down hardware merchant. What he knew about ladies' underwear, I would not know. I am serious about that. This firm to which I refer was manufacturing an order of ladies' underwear, I suppose for the Wrens or some of the women's forces of the army or navy. Another inspector had been a tailor of overcoats, yet he was inspecting women's underwear. He knew no more about it, as I say, than I would if I were asked to go out and judge a horse show.

Another thing that I know would not happen now, but it did then, is that these inspectors were more interested in getting outfits for their wives and children than they were in inspecting the garments in the plant. I know it would not happen now, but I know it did then and I hope it never will again if there is an emergency. I hope the inspection staff will be of a higher order.

I wish to quote from the minister's words at page 4510 of *Hansard* for June 7, 1955. He said:

At the resolution stage the Leader of the Opposition implied that in asking for the continuation of the Defence Production Act the government is getting away from traditional methods of parliamentary procedure and parliamentary responsibility, and that there is a denial of the supremacy of parliament and the rule of law. I must admit that I am only a layman in this field, but it seems to me that this is not the case. Under our present parliamentary procedures the house has an opportunity to review the responsibilities and functions of each department at least once a year, when the estimates are being considered. Traditionally this is the