

*Emergency Powers Act*

previous occasions, should explain to the house, why this measure standing on the order paper in his name should be approved by parliament.

I can only conclude, Mr. Chairman, that the government realizes that it is an unpopular measure; that they realize that there is in fact no justification for asking parliament to continue it; that they realize that considerable opprobrium will come the way of the government if in fact it is forced through; and that they do not want the Prime Minister to be the object of that opprobrium. They do not want the Prime Minister to subject himself to the criticism which is going to come his way if he has his name associated actively with this measure.

But, Mr. Chairman, this house and this country must not lose sight of the fact that this measure stands on the order paper in the name of the Prime Minister. Of course the government as a whole is responsible for the legislation passed in this house; but in a peculiar way legislation of this type is the responsibility of the Prime Minister. He introduced it. It is his resolution, and his particularly will be the responsibility if it passes and if, for a further year, extraordinary, sweeping, emergency and quite unjustifiable powers are taken by the cabinet and are taken away from the House of Commons composed of the people's elected representatives.

That then is the first unusual thing about this measure. The second unusual thing about it is this. Notwithstanding the lengths to which the Minister of Justice went in trying to impress us with the seriousness of this emergency—an effort which by its very laboured nature, Mr. Chairman, suggested to me more than anything else that the emergency is pretty much of a phony—and in spite of the fact that the Minister of Justice used no less than nine separate times the expression “the emergency of apprehended war” and, in support of his suggestion that that is the nature of the emergency, mentioned the unrest in South Africa, in Tunisia, in Morocco and those various distant parts of the world; in spite of his contention—which was, I suggest to him with all due respect, unsubstantially founded—that there was an emergency, I want to point out that this parliament is being asked to give up all its rights to the cabinet for a further year at a time when other parliaments and other legislative bodies in other free countries of the world are finding that it is more and more appropriate to restore to parliament the powers which formerly were theirs, to restore to a much greater extent the rule of law and to deprive

their governments to a much greater extent of the absolute control and power which they had previously exercised.

I point out to you, Mr. Chairman, that within the last two days headlines about the United States have drawn attention to the fact that control measures in that country have been allowed to lapse: important measures giving the government, the executive, wide powers of control over the economy of that nation. They are following exactly the opposite course from that being followed by this government. Yet the United States government should have occasion, if any government should, to be seized with the magnitude of the emergency if there is in fact an emergency which really justifies the taking of emergency powers by the government.

Then again in the United Kingdom, although not in exactly the same sphere but in a closely related one, we find that the government there is taking steps to denationalize certain of the industries which were nationalized by their predecessors. I admit that it is not exactly a parallel, but I certainly suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that if there were a real emergency such as is claimed by this government of Canada, the government of the United Kingdom would not be weakening its control over the economy of the nation which had been acquired under the Labour government by the nationalization measures which were passed by that government. The government of Canada is therefore unique amongst the democracies of the western world in moving further along the road to controls and emergency legislation. The government of the United States and the government of the United Kingdom are moving in exactly the opposite direction.

Then, Mr. Chairman, what about this emergency? It is significant that every time the government want to assume to themselves powers which deprive parliament of its powers and prevent us from carrying out our responsibilities, they find some sort of new emergency. After the war, in the immediate post-war years, it was the emergency arising out of the war and arising out of the transition from war to peace. That was a new kind of emergency. That emergency carried on for two or three years. It was extraordinary, Mr. Chairman, how that emergency was prolonged. It was an emergency which was supposed to last for a year but, as you will remember, we were called upon, on two subsequent separate occasions, to extend that act.

Then along came Korea and the government asked for emergency powers which