

*Public Works Act*

no excuse whatsoever for members not to have had the time to read it. However, after doing so I could not help but be appalled at the horrendous power which this bill seeks to transfer to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Cosgrove). For example, in Clause 3 we see these words:

"(3) The Minister may, with the approval of the governor in council, incur expenditures or perform, or have performed, services or work in relation to

(a) properties belonging to Canada of which he does not have the management, charge or direction; or

(b) properties not belonging to Canada."

What a colossal fraud this bill hopes to perpetrate on the people of Canada! The government is now seeking authority to sell or lease any property, whether or not the government owns it and whether or not it is required for public purposes. This action reminds me of my air cadet training days when one of the men in our squadron had difficulty in landing without damaging the wheels or the tips of the airplane. On being reprimanded by our instructor, he replied, "Thank you, sir, but I am not worried. I do not own it and I am not going to buy it." That is about the way it is with this government in this bill. We do not own the property, we are not going to buy it, but we are going to claim the right to sell it.

My own concern is not so much with sales and lease-backs per se, but rather with the blanket authority granted in this bill to sell any land. It has already been said this afternoon what a horror story scenario that is. While the possibility of selling all the government property and any private property they fancy to foreign investors and then renting it back is highly unlikely to occur, in my opinion there still remains the need for parliamentary control. Unfortunately, this bill, if passed as it stands, is completely devoid of any parliamentary control. I say this because in Clause 2 it says that Section 39 of the act is replaced and the following substituted:

Notwithstanding anything in this act or in any other act, any public work may be sold or leased, under the authority of the governor in council, and the proceeds of such sale or lease shall be accounted for as public moneys; but such public work shall be so sold or leased by tender or at auction after public advertisement, unless it is otherwise authorized by the governor in council."

I want this House and the people of Canada to know that in one brief paragraph the words "governor in council" are repeated not once but twice. There is no mention in what I just read of the Parliament of Canada. Oh, no, it is simply the governor in council. I submit to you, sir, that this is simply too much power to place in the hands of one minister of any government. But then orders in council are, of course, the golden rule of this Liberal regime. For those Canadians not familiar with the term, an order in council is a device used by cabinet to approve certain regulations without subjecting the rule changes and new appointments to public debate. This device, if used properly and responsibly, can make the operations of government much more efficient. However, if it is used irresponsibly, the order in council method of government, I submit, can wreak havoc on parliamentary democracy. Three recent examples of improper orders in council usage are the VIA Rail cutbacks, the conversion to the metric system of measurement and the emergency planning order. These orders

in council, unilateral government actions, have caused substantial public resentment and even anger. But since they were implemented through order in council, neither the public nor Members of Parliament had any recourse. I submit this is most important. People have no way of making their case at a public hearing or through parliamentary debate. The only way the government actions can be challenged is through the courts.

● (1530)

In my opinion, Canadians did not vote for a government that requires them, if they wish their views heard, to sue that government in a court of law. This would not be necessary if this government had any respect whatever for parliament and its members who are the people's representatives. However, this Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his colleagues have shown and are still showing a contempt for Parliament through the excessive use of orders in council. This has already been referred to this afternoon. I checked on this matter and I found that in the years under the present right hon. Prime Minister's administration, there were 39,048 orders in council passed. Just let me repeat that number, 39,048 orders in council, which is an average of 3,254 a year.

I say to the people in Canada, through you, sir, that Canadians should be wary of any government that abuses Parliament by misusing the order in council. But then we must remember that it was the present Prime Minister who held this entire institution up to ridicule when he said, referring to members of the opposition, "When they are 50 yards from Parliament Hill, they are no longer hon. members; they are just nobodies." I remind the Prime Minister of the words, "If you want to be respected, you must show respect." Unfortunately, his fuddle-duddle statements and his pirouettes in high places over the years would indicate that respect for anything is not his long suit.

And speaking of arbitrary rulings, I am pleased to see the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pepin) in his seat this afternoon, I received only yesterday another disheartening piece of news from the Department of Transport. It indicated that 136.60 miles of CNR tracks will not be used after August 1 to provide service between Liverpool and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. Obviously, no consideration has been given by this government to the enterprises and employment opportunities of the citizens along the south shore of Nova Scotia who will be affected by this retrograde, reprehensible action, and I must protest the destruction of the CNR service in my riding in the loudest possible voice. However, we have no recourse. It is an action that has been taken by the Canadian Transport Commission, obviously with the agreement of the minister. This government cares only about the people of Nova Scotia when their members are down there seeking votes. But now, picture if you will, an entire area from Liverpool, Queen's County, to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia with absolutely no rail service. This is frightening. For the life of me I cannot understand what those people and the industries affected will do. In that particular area there is a tremendous amount of heavy industry which requires the use of flat cars and the CNR service.