

implying that they are not severe enough. Of course, there are both points of view and both will have to be given consideration.

Having regard to the conditions that prevail in Canada, I wonder whether the Minister of Justice has not now some qualms of conscience at having repealed section 98 of the criminal code. He shakes his head, nevertheless I suggest that while it might not have been necessary in time of peace, it would be a useful adjunct to the laws of the country at the present time. I invite him to consider the reenactment of section 98.

I am glad in a way that the Prime Minister has decided to submit the whole question to a special committee, but I recognize this as an old practice of his, perhaps to evade responsibility. I say that in no harsh or vindictive spirit. My recollection of the first important project that was brought before this house in the session of 1922, when my right hon. friend was facing parliament for the first time as Prime Minister, is that there came up for consideration the question of railway rates in the west. His government, instead of having a policy on this great and vital question, referred the matter to a committee of the House of Commons and so passed on responsibility. I well remember the part played in that committee by the hon. gentleman who is now sitting in the treasury benches occupying the position of Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar). I remember the trial kite that was put out by the gentleman who was chairman of that special committee as to what the report would be—I refer to Hon. A. K. Maclean—and I believe my memory is accurate in that regard. It was stated that the committee was prepared to accept the draft report that had been made by the chairman and the present Minister of Mines and Resources, then representing Marquette. He put a pistol to the head of the Prime Minister and there was a right about face on the question. I have a long memory and I can recall that exactly. I remember being told the whole situation by a supporter of the government of that day, a gentleman who is not now on earth but whom the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ralston) knew very well in his lifetime. That gentleman said that never again would that sort of thing happen.

I hope that these references to committees are not made by the executive for the purpose of sidestepping responsibility. The government is responsible to the people and should have a policy.

The defence of Canada regulations are based, I take it, upon those in vogue in England, although I suppose they are not the exact counterpart. In fact, I have heard the

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criticism that these regulations are very much more severe than those in England. Well, I think it is necessary in war time that some power should be vested in the executive to control subversive elements in the country. I am all for law and order. Whatever I may have been in my younger days, as I grow older and more mature I am all for law and order. I am for law and order in Canada in war time and I believe the government must have some power at its elbow.

I have been reading the life of Abraham Lincoln by Carl Sandburg, "Lincoln—the War Years," and I recall a criticism which was made of Lincoln and his government because of the virtual suspension of habeas corpus, and the unconstitutionality of the executive action at that time of travail in the life of our neighbouring republic. Subsequently, if I remember rightly, his act was declared ultra vires by a chief justice who had been a member of his own administration. What a situation! So far as I am concerned the Prime Minister and his government must have power by executive action to deal with any emergent situation that may arise from time to time while the country is at war, but I hope they will exercise that power with the utmost judicial discretion and will play no favourites. That is all I have to say in that regard.

I desire to devote some attention to the war effort of this administration. The Prime Minister and hon. gentlemen opposite may not agree with what I have to say, but as I stated in the very opening remarks I addressed to the house, this is a time for clear thinking and straight talking. May I refer to the situation in Canada prior to September, 1939. Perhaps I should go back a little farther than that, because during the election I heard in my own constituency a criticism of the government of Mr. Bennett from 1930 to 1935 on the ground that in those years it had not done anything with respect to the question of national defence or empire defence. I do not think it was a big issue in the election, but reference has been made to the question and I think I ought to justify the position that was taken at that time.

In the years from 1930 to 1935 Canada was in the throes of an economic revolution unparalleled in the history of the world. We were faced with declining revenues and with the necessity of imposing taxation upon the people, and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and the membership of this house how any government under those circumstances would have been justified in imposing new taxation upon the people of Canada for national or empire defence in the light of the situation as it was