

*Emergency Powers Act*

the propaganda that will be accepted where people are suffering under depressed conditions. Whether it is here, in Europe, Africa, or in Asia, poverty, misery and want provide the seed bed for communist propaganda. I want to see neither a resurgence—which is quite possible—of what we destroyed during the war, namely fascism and nazism, nor a growth of a totalitarian form of communism—I believe that both are opposite sides of the same coin—threatening the world as they do with recurrent disaster.

**Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the members of the house were definitely reassured this afternoon when the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) gave his statement when moving this resolution. I certainly felt reassured by his very sincerity. I want to congratulate the Prime Minister upon conveying to the house a clear-cut definition of what the government proposes to do. I also want to congratulate him on observing meticulously the true democratic process. I think it must be refreshing to everybody to know that our Prime Minister will not try to hide things under a heavy cloak of language but will come straightforwardly to the point and say: We are going to ask parliament to give us additional powers; and those powers will be voted by parliament and none other.

This afternoon I found myself in fairly complete agreement with the leader of the opposition (Mr. Drew). I found that we were standing in a different position from that in which we stood on Friday last. I find that I am ready to defend the Mr. Drew of today against the Mr. Drew of last Friday. He gave an excellent address as did the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr (Mr. Coldwell). Because they said many of the things that I perhaps would have said, and certainly many with which I agree, I am not going to try to give a long speech this afternoon nor am I going to attempt to cover the ground they have covered. I think it is important, however—and I believe the Prime Minister would want it—to place definitely before the house the position we take with respect to the measure which is to be introduced as a result of this resolution. We agree, Mr. Speaker, that we are living in a time of danger and emergency. The emergency is real to us. Our words up to this time in the session have indicated that we feel that is the situation. Furthermore, we are of the opinion that the present emergency is most certainly of indeterminate duration. I do not believe any of us can see the end of it. It may last for much longer than any of us have any reason to suspect.

We agree too, Mr. Speaker, that it is wise not to invoke the War Measures Act now. We think that this is a far better way of

[Mr. Coldwell.]

dealing with a situation that is not clearly a war situation. The Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) was very wise in pointing out to the house this afternoon that until we are facing actual war conditions it is better not to bring in the War Measures Act, but to ask for a transfer of certain powers to the central government in order that they can meet the situation as it now exists. But he did promise that if at any time we do face actual war conditions he will bring in and proclaim the War Measures Act.

There is one thing I should like to say at this point, Mr. Speaker, by way of warning. The government must be careful not to impose any measure upon the country unless it is certainly in the best interests of the country as a whole. The Prime Minister gave us assurance that that would be true; but let us not ask now for any more powers than we intend to use, and when we do get those powers into the hands of the government let us immediately put them to use.

Like the two speakers who preceded me, I do not like to see a lot of stand-by powers that may be used as a salutary warning to the country. In my contribution to the speech from the throne debate I mentioned that a spirit of gouge is in the air today, and because the spirit of gouge is in the air there must be some protection for the ordinary citizens of this country. The only way that that protection can be afforded, in our judgment, is to have powers in the hands of the government sufficient that they can take action to see to it that the freedoms of the individuals of this country are preserved. But at the same time, Mr. Speaker, let me emphasize this. We believe there is a definite limit to the freedom of any individual. That limit has been reached when an individual, or a group of individuals, attempts to encroach upon the same liberties of other people, and we feel that that limit has been exceeded in a good many instances by people who are in a position to control supplies and production in this country, particularly the middleman.

**An hon. Member:** And prices.

**Mr. Low:** Yes, and prices. We feel that whenever the government asks for unusual powers to deal with a situation of this kind, it is wise for them to put those measures to immediate use.

On two or three different occasions during this session we have said we feel that what the government does about controls ought to be done overnight, and not be spread over a long period of time, a period of waiting and watching, because it just gives the other fellow the chance to push his prices up to