

*Defence Production Act*

this bill—or the act, as it will be then—should come before the House of Commons for consideration and revision at certain periods of time, such as three years or five years.

May I just say to the Minister of Defence Production that no one knows what will happen within the next three years. Undoubtedly a general election will be held, because the lifetime of this parliament will run out within three years. If this act remains upon the statute books indefinitely, then the government that succeeds the present government—whether it be the present Liberal government, a government composed of the Conservatives or any other government—will have on the statute books a measure which will enable them to carry on in the manner the bill outlines. It seems to me that what should be done is that the government should place a time limit in this bill. I am not suggesting that it could be done on second reading. There has been quite a good deal of controversy, but if the minister would announce that when this bill goes into committee the government will be prepared to consider an amendment to the effect that it should remain in force for three years or five years, I am convinced that this debate would come to an end.

We have been told that if a C.C.F. government took office after the next general election—something which may or may not be likely; I am not going to suggest one or the other—these powers might be used in the manner in which some hon. members suggest. I want to say that, of course, if a C.C.F. government took office after the next general election it would function exactly in the same way as any other democratic government would function in a parliamentary institution.

We have had examples of labour and democratic socialist governments in power in various countries such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and in my own province of Saskatchewan. I want to say that those governments have been more democratic than any Conservative or Liberal government which preceded them. Indeed, they have been ultrademocratic. Indeed, in those countries legislation guaranteeing civil and personal rights has been placed on the statute books by governments of the C.C.F. complexion. You have only to look at the statute books of Saskatchewan or the statute books of the United Kingdom, Norway, Sweden or Denmark to realize that that is true. To say that we have any aims directed at subverting democratic institutions is, of course, entirely false and wrong.

May I say this to my hon. friends. If this legislation is left on the statute books and

a Conservative government takes office after the next election, what then? Has the house or the country forgotten the record of the Bennett Conservative administration between 1930 and 1935? Has the government forgotten the blank cheque legislation under which the Bennett government subverted all democratic rights of many of the people of this country? Have the people of this country forgotten the record of the Conservative government in those years when Mr. Bennett came into this house and, after questioning by the hon. member for Quebec South (Mr. Power) and the former member Mr. Ilsley, admitted that under the legislation that had been passed by the Conservative government they had given to certain financial institutions in this country the right and power to issue false balance sheets in order to mislead the people of Canada into believing that those institutions were in a condition other than that in which they were? Have we forgotten that? I say to my friends to my right, look at the record of the Conservative party in those years from 1930 to 1935, and compare it with what has been the record in recent years in this country.

I say to my right hon. friend the Minister of Defence Production that elections are uncertain. If this legislation is put on the statute books without any limitation, there is no reason to suppose that a Conservative government might not take office after the next election and use this legislation in the same manner as the Bennett regime used that legislation to which I have referred in the 1930's. From every point of view I think it would be much better to have a time limit placed on this legislation, and I make that suggestion to the administration at this time.

I think that might be done when this bill goes into committee. We have now reached the stage where there is a contest between the official opposition and the government on the second reading of this bill. I am in favour of the second reading of this bill, but after the bill has been given second reading, endorsing the principle of the bill, I have that suggestion to make.

What is the principle of the bill? It is to give authority to the minister and the government to do those things that may be required in order that this country may carry out its defence activities at the present time. Under present world conditions I think the government should have the right to say that certain materials should be channelled in directions that are necessary for the defence of this country. I do not think there is any dispute on any side of the house in that regard.

May I just say in parentheses, Mr. Speaker, that I believe, as do my colleagues, that those