

Defence Production Act

compulsion during the railway negotiations of last year would indicate how far the government has gone in their thinking along those lines. Yet they are prepared to accept this bill, apparently, without a time limit.

Now we find the government in the position of trying to blame the opposition for the delay. I believe I dealt with that a little earlier. All that needed to be done was to put a time limit in the bill and the debate would have been over weeks ago. If a reasonable compromise were offered today, the debate would be over and we could get on with the business. The government and no one else is responsible for this unwarranted delay.

The public in general are not interested in the oriental idea of face saving. Apparently that seems to be what they are engaged in, a plan of face saving. My constituents are not interested in that. The people of Canada are not interested in that. They want us to get on with the business of the country. I think the suggestion of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) this morning was a good one and should be acted upon. I rather think that the country resented the suggestion the other day of the Prime Minister that another parliament should be in honour bound to carry out the commitment made in this house without an act or a statute to back it up. The Prime Minister is an authority on and a student of constitutional affairs. I think it was very unrealistic of him to make such a suggestion and, frankly, it was not acceptable. I was really amazed at the suggestion.

I return again to the speeches of Mackenzie King on the supremacy of parliament. It is amazing what a few short years of power will do to dull those issues. I am very firmly convinced the people are not pleased to learn that their representatives are failing to find common ground. These same people, these constituents of mine—and they are no different from the other 264 constituencies in Canada—are now aware through the press of the wide powers asked for in the Defence Production Act. They are also aware they are being asked for on a permanent basis, without time limit and without recourse to parliament.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate this. The public generally are of the opinion that reasonable men, the elected representatives of the people, through debate and discussion, should be able to arrive at a compromise satisfactory to all concerned. Compromise is one of the attributes of democracy. For the sake of Canada, let us get on with the business and arrive at a reasonable solution of this problem.

Mr. F. E. Lennard (Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak in this debate I want it to be understood that I am not filibustering. The filibuster has caught up with me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): We must hear this.

Mr. Lennard: Several days ago the hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Croll) said that the people of Canada could not care less about this issue. He said that they were not interested in it and that they could not care less. As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, may I say that the reason I am speaking today on this issue is that there is such great concern amongst the people in my riding. On this issue I have been approached—by contacts over the week ends and by letters—more than I have been approached on almost any other issue in the 17 years that I have been a member of this house, with possibly one exception.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): You have a great issue here.

Mr. Lennard: Yes; I think so.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): It is almost equal to the North Star issue.

Mr. Lennard: The exception to which I referred is that in connection with the debate on resale price maintenance, when this government pushed that measure through. What a flop that has turned out to be. It is closing up small businesses in my part of the world and it is a decided failure.

It is my privilege, Mr. Speaker, to speak this afternoon supporting the amendment moved by the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Brooks) and which I had the honour of seconding. The amendment reads as follows:

That Bill No. 256, an act to amend the Defence Production Act, be not now read a second time, but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the standing committee on banking and commerce with instructions that they have power to examine and report upon the advisability of

(a) placing the Department of Defence Production on a permanent basis and conferring on the department such powers as ought to be of a continuing nature; and

(b) conferring for a period of one year, or until extended by parliament, such additional powers as may be strictly necessary in the light of the existing world conditions.

I should like to quote the comments made by the hon. member for Royal (Mr. Brooks). As reported at page 5376 of *Hansard* they were as follows:

I contend that the continuance of those powers permanently or for an indefinite period is a positive threat, a threat held over the heads of industry and labour in this country. I also contend, Mr. Speaker, that it is not necessary to