

Defence Production Act

that are acceptable and there are powers which the government itself says should not be continued. There is no need to repeat what has been said before. Hon. members opposite have asked, "Why did you not oppose this before?" Hon. members know that the same situation arises here and in Westminster and in other parliaments of our kind.

When the act came forward in 1951 for the setting up of the Department of Defence Production, we had to accept the act in principle. We had no choice, since to vote against that act on second reading in 1951 would have been to vote against the very thing we had been asking for before the government introduced it, a Department of Defence Production. The powers went with it, and we made it clear that we thought those powers were excessive and were wrong. But the government itself placed a time limit of July 31, 1956, on those powers and said those powers would not be continued past that time. The government said, not we, that these should not be continuing powers.

All we have said is, "Deal with those powers that you said must not be continuing powers. Make the Department of Defence Production permanent, plus sensible delegated powers properly spelled out and clearly understood by Canadians, and you will find us supporting such a proposition because we have supported it and have asked for it." When the hon. member for Spadina says that he understands the position of the Leader of the Opposition now to be such and such, may I remind him that that is the position we took in 1951; that is the position in March of this year, and it is the position we have taken since this act came before the house for second reading in the name of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Croll: I did not misstate your position. You agreed that what I said your position was, is your position.

Mr. Drew: No, I do not. I am pointing out that the mistake on the part of the hon. member for Spadina is that he said this act is subject to review. It is not.

Mr. Croll: May I interrupt? We have lots of time. I said it was subject to review by reason of the amendment that was offered by the minister and by virtue of the statement that was made by the Prime Minister the day before yesterday.

Mr. Drew: That does not make the act subject to review at all.

Mr. Croll: The orders.

Mr. Drew: It does not make the act subject to review at all. The Minister of Defence Production extended a rather moth-eaten

olive branch in the form of a declaration that the orders made under this act would be tabled and that within a certain period of time after those orders were tabled this could be brought before the house. I have too much respect for the judgment and quick thinking of the hon. member for Spadina to believe for one moment that he is under any illusion as to what review that would give.

In the first place it would be a review of an order, not a review of the act. It is only the right to object. We have already seen over and over again when a motion of this nature is made that someone on the other side gets up immediately, as they have the right to do, after the objection has been made and moves the adjournment of the debate. That is the end of it. There is no assurance of anything else. It is the right to one peep and that is all. It is the right for one member to say that he does not like it. Even our friends over here would not have the opportunity to speak, because a member of the government would get up and move the adjournment and the peep would be all over. It would be one little objection, that is all; it would not be a review of the act.

It is no reflection on the word of the Prime Minister—what I am talking about now is parliamentary procedure—when I say that the assurance of the Prime Minister means literally nothing. It means nothing for two reasons. First of all he cannot give an effective assurance and, second, we have the right already. All he is saying is that we will have the right to a peep, just a little sound and nothing else.

Mr. Croll: You mean a squeak, not a peep.

Mr. Drew: Whichever you like. Then the axe falls, or the guillotine as it is commonly called in parliamentary terms. That is not an assurance. The hon. member for Spadina knows that very well, because there have been times when he has seen that right exercised in jurisdictions other than this. On a motion to go into supply there is a much more effective opportunity for discussion of these things.

May I point out that any opposition would be very stupid to avail itself of the assurance of the Prime Minister instead of dealing with the matter by motion on supply, when it has to go through to a vote. So there is nothing offered, even if you accept it as meaning something in itself, which it does not. Any opposition would be sublimely stupid if it availed itself of that right and did not wait for supply, when it can put forward a motion by way of objection in relation to a specified