

\* *Defence Production Act*

Not only are the people concerned about this matter; the press have also taken it up. I am not going to quote at length, because statements have been quoted from many papers across Canada; but I draw to your attention two editorials appearing in the Ottawa papers, one last week in the *Ottawa Citizen* and one last night in the *Ottawa Journal*. These two papers are in close touch with things on parliament hill. They are two papers of very high standing and their editorial writers have been rather fearless and consistent in their criticisms.

I was much concerned about the editorial in the *Journal* last night. I am not quoting this editorial but I shall paraphrase it. The thing that struck me in the very first line was the fact that the opposition are not fighting an emergency act, that the Defence Production Act is not an emergency act. They pointed out that nobody pretends—not even the minister or the Prime Minister—that this is an emergency act. But they point out that this act is being passed in peacetime when there is not a shot being fired around the world, and when statesmen are gathering together to try to work out peace throughout the world and prospects are looking fairly bright at the present time.

They point out that on the eve of this meeting, the eve of a conference which we have high hopes will bring world settlement, the demand is being made that parliament should surrender to the government powers that are extraordinary, that are undefined and indefinite. This act, they point out, is in peacetime, non-emergency legislation, asking for cabinet powers which traditionally and historically belong to parliament alone.

Then comes the remainder of the sentence which actually caused me grave concern, coming as it does from a reputable paper and a high-class editorial writer. Speaking about those powers he states:

. . . powers . . . which should be yielded by parliament only under state of mortal peril.

Could anything in the nature of an editorial be stronger than that, coming from those very close to the scene of government? I repeat that phrase, "only under state of mortal peril".

I have given you the idea of the people with whom I have come in contact and the position of the press. But in the speeches I have heard here praising this bill or supporting the bill there is a term that has been consistently used; I refer to "trust parliament". I find that very difficult to accept. As I have said, I have sat on the sidelines listening to this debate, and the way that this has been twisted around has to me been rather amazing, or at least it seems amazing.

[Mr. Blair.]

This thought comes to me. Can parliament not be trusted if the act is again brought before parliament with a time limit? You say now, "trust parliament". That is part of the argument. But if a year or two years from now this act were brought before parliament, we could trust parliament adequately to deal with it. I have therefore been rather amazed that this expression should be used so frequently in this debate.

So far as parliament is concerned, and the retention of power by parliament, this afternoon when I was trying to get some notes ready for the purpose of speaking tonight, there came to me something that was said to me by an old clergyman with regard to an argument, or a matter we were discussing. The question came up about cutting corners. I have never forgotten what that old gentleman said to me. He said, "You can never accomplish good by first doing wrong".

That seems to be the argument here. By those who have intervened in this debate we are told how necessary it is to have an act of this type. But we are doing wrong in the way the act is introduced, in the clauses in the act and in the fact that the matter is being taken out of the hands of parliament. You cannot accomplish good by first doing wrong. This thing has a wrong beginning. Parliament should be recognized in the beginning. As long as parliament is not recognized you are making a wrong start. Therefore, with a start like that, certainly no good could be accomplished.

I remember very well,—as will many of the older members of the house, the late T. L. Church, the former member for Broadview. He was a beloved character in this house. As a younger member I used to listen to his speeches. In dealing with a subject like this he had one quotation he often used, and you will recognize it, Mr. Speaker. He used to say, "Woe to the lawyers". I never was too sure where the quotation came from. It may have been biblical, but I am not just too sure of its source. If T. L. Church were present in this house today certainly we would hear that quotation, "Woe to the lawyers".

Why do I say that? The other day somebody said we had some 70 lawyers in the house. A large proportion of those lawyers are on the government side. I cannot picture lawyers ever agreeing to this type of legislation. I cannot understand the Prime Minister, one of the most distinguished jurists in this country and a former president of the Canadian Bar Association, doing so. I cannot understand his position because of what he had consistently said previously. As a lawyer in the high office that he holds, he should recognize that this is not a good bill. As Prime