

Emergency Powers Act

in Ottawa, one Tory who follows the old traditional Tory policy and is still optimistic enough to believe that he can vie with the Liberal party for the support of big business in this country. A few days ago he applied the term "omnipotent" to the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) or suggested that he should be given omnipotent power.

Mr. Fleming: Oh, wait a minute. Far be it from me, Mr. Speaker, to make any such suggestion. I did not suggest that the Minister of Trade and Commerce should be made omnipotent. What I did say was that the effect of the bill was to make him omnipotent; that it would have been just as simple for the bill to have said that in brief terms and let it go at that. That is a great deal of difference from what my hon. friend is now saying.

Mr. Noseworthy: I accept the correction, Mr. Speaker. I understood the hon. member to say that the bill could be rewritten and that one clause in that bill should read: The minister shall be omnipotent.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think the hon. member is referring to a debate of the present session on another subject. If so it is not in order for him to do so.

Mr. Noseworthy: As to the hon. member's speech this afternoon, I thought he gave a good deal of evidence of belief in his own omniscience. He states, for instance, that controls cannot now work; and the proof that they cannot work is the fact that the hon. member for Eglinton says so. He states that the people will not support controls; and the only authority we have for that statement is that the hon. member for Eglinton said so. There is considerable evidence that the people of Canada would support the government at this time in measures of control necessary to curb inflation. I have already pointed out, as has been pointed out by others in the house, that the trade unions of this country have indicated their readiness to go along with the government and to co-operate with the government in the application of such controls as are necessary.

It has already been pointed out that public opinion polls have indicated that a great majority of the people in Canada would support these necessary controls. I do not think the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) is giving the Canadian people credit for being very intelligent when he suggests that everybody would want controls on those things that did not affect them; the farmers and others would not want anything that they were producing or had for sale to be controlled. I think the Canadian people as a whole today see the seriousness of the situation and that they would readily support the

government in the adoption of and in the application of necessary controls.

One of the arguments that the hon. member used was that prices are now too high; that they are at an all-time high, and it is too late to try to impose price controls. Well, if I recall correctly, the hon. member opposed price controls a year ago, when prices were not nearly as high as they are now, just as vigorously as he did this afternoon.

He admitted that price controls may be necessary in a period of total war. It is true we are not in the state of total war, but no one has criticized the government in this house more vigorously than the hon. member for Eglinton for not preparing for such an emergency. No one has indicated more vigorously that we may find ourselves in such a position without warning at almost any time. If such is a possibility, if it is true that we must prepare for such an emergency, and since no one disagrees with the statement that in such an event the government should have such powers, then I fail to see how we can logically oppose granting to the government at this time the powers that are necessary.

We must stop this merry-go-round sometime. Today's paper carried a report that two of the great labour leaders in this country, the heads of two of the greatest unions in this country, have already announced that their unions, representing hundreds of thousands of workers, will immediately ask for an increase in wages to offset the recent rise in prices. That just cannot go on indefinitely, and whatever steps are necessary should be taken by the government and without delay.

We have only to take up almost any paper today to find advertisers asking the public to buy now before prices go higher. The longer the government delays the worse the situation becomes. I suggest the government should be given that power; and furthermore, it should undertake to use that power by whatever measures are necessary.

There is just one further point to which I should like to call the minister's attention. In his broadcast reported in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* of this morning, he is quoted as saying:

Canadians could best help the defence effort and overcome inflation by refusing to buy anything unless it was an absolute essential.

I presume there are still some people in Canada, possibly a great many, who can buy non-essentials, but certainly with food alone for a family of four costing now, according to the dominion bureau of statistics, \$22 a week, the ordinary people of this country just cannot afford to buy any non-essentials. It takes