

Defence Production Act

that they made; if it had not been that they were willing to sacrifice their homes, their positions and their jobs and everything they had to go out and fight for us; if industry itself had not been willing to co-operate and to support those men and women who were out on the fronts fighting for us; if management and every last man and woman in industry had not been willing to give their best, to give everything they had, to do everything they could—I am quite sure that no one would be more ready than the minister to say that he would not have been able to accomplish what he did if he had not had the full, free and magnanimous co-operation of every service man and service woman in this country, of every head of industry and of every man who was working and doing his job in the industrial life of Canada.

We desire to preserve our freedom. We are ready to go along and co-operate and work together in building a magnificent future so that we may give the world leadership that is required of a nation of this kind. We cannot help but be reminded, as I said the other day, that these things come very gradually and subtly. There is no thought as far as the minister is concerned that there would be any question of a dictatorship, but I want to say to you today that many nations, many big states, many great people throughout the history of the world right down to our present time were conquered from within rather than conquered from without. Those principles that form the basis of our freedom and the background of our free institutions are the reasons why I and the other hon. members of my party have taken our stand and have risen in this house on this great occasion to add a word of warning for the protection of the future of this nation.

Mr. H. O. White (Middlesex East): Mr. Speaker, following the other members in this debate, I feel it is my job as a member of parliament to interpret to the house the ideas of my constituents. My constituents are not concerned with the particular fine points of the Defence Production Act, but my constituents do know the difference between right and wrong. While I was home over the week end I found, as I have said, that they were not particularly interested in the fine points but they do think there should be a limit to the powers granted to any minister and that the delay in the passing of this act is not caused by the Conservative opposition, but by the failure of the government to be reasonable and to put a time limit on this act.

Of all the prime ministers of Canada, the Right Hon. Mackenzie King was one who particularly impressed upon the people of Canada

the supremacy of parliament. Here we are seeing it denied. Liberalism has gone back a long way. The Liberals seem to forget the principles that Mackenzie King laid down many years ago as to the supremacy of parliament. If parliament is not supreme, then we have a dictatorship. We have approached very close to that in the last few weeks. I am sure that many Liberals across the house and many Liberals in the country, deep down in their hearts, dislike this type of legislation.

I should like at this point to commend the hon. member for London (Mr. Mitchell) for his notable speech of June 20. I just want to emphasize what he pointed out at that time, that the president of the Canadian Bar Association, the man who is now the Prime Minister of Canada, in addressing the Canadian Bar Association in October, 1931, had this to say of an act that was being passed in an emergency, an act to confer certain powers upon the governor in council in respect to unemployment and farm relief and the maintenance of peace, order and good government in Canada. At that time he pointed out that this was a dangerous type of legislation, but that it was a necessary step. I should like to point out that the present Prime Minister, speaking in October of 1931, described that as a dangerous type of legislation. What must he think today of the act that is now before us?

I should also like to point out that that act of 1931 had a time limit, I believe, of one year. I do not think anyone in the country questions the advisability of extending powers for the defence of Canada, but some do question the advisability of adopting an attitude that this should continue forever—not in a changing world—not in a democracy. Two or three years ago the right hon. Minister of Defence Production paid a visit to South America. It had of course nothing to do with defence production, but had to do with trade. Whilst we cannot say anything very favourable about the increase in trade with the South American countries, I believe he brought back an idea or two with him. There they have dictators, and he probably thought, "This is a good idea; maybe we can adopt this in Canada". I should like to point out to the right hon. minister that history as it relates to dictators through the years ought to persuade him to take another look and seriously reconsider the course he apparently has laid out for himself.

Changing the line of thought for a moment, I should like to say I am amazed at the attitude of the C.C.F. party as far as this legislation is concerned, for under this legislation labour contracts can be ignored or cancelled. Under this legislation the right to strike can be denied. Surely the near