

declaration of a minister, not made in parliament, commenced to dip into the pockets of the people and take money from these pockets without any authority from parliament? In that case, Mr. Chairman, the welkin would have rung with denunciations of the government of the day, and protestations of these principles of small "I" liberalism which would have been violated in that very act on the part of the government. What would have happened in the time of Laurier? Can you imagine such a thing as this happening in Laurier's time? Even to suggest such a thing is to offend the memory of that statesman. Can you imagine what would have happened if this thing had been done by a government in the days when the present Prime Minister was in opposition? Every word in the English language would have been drawn upon by him to denounce in the name of liberalism what the government was doing. And yet it has remained for this government, in the days when its fidelity to democracy and to parliamentary institutions has given way to the belief in its own absolute right to rule, to do violence to everything that small "I" liberalism has stood for, ever since liberalism became identified with a political party.

Condone what the government has done here; legalize the robbery that has gone on since November 17 last, and this parliament will have been an accomplice with this government in such an assault on the constitution of the country as we may never recover from.

The minister has invited this house, in a gesture which I say is an insult to the intelligence of the house, to believe that this was done in obedience to necessity. How necessity is always conjured up to serve the ends of tyrants! Last week I quoted in this house the words of William Pitt: "Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves". And naturally it was necessity to which the Minister of Finance tonight ascribed the act which, in the name of the government, he embarked upon on November 17.

Necessity! Was there necessity for over-riding the constitution, for over-riding settled constitutional principles centuries old, principles which have been the bulwark of the rights, not simply of a few but of all citizens? This is not an issue that affects just a few people; this is an issue that touches every man, woman and child in Canada who values freedom, and who can see, in what this government has been doing in the past three and one-half months, steps toward oligarchical rule and the destruction of our parliamentary institutions.

I want to remind the committee that this kind of issue has been fought over in days gone by. Men were not prepared in other days to submit to arbitrary measures on the part of the government. It was this very issue that brought to a focus the struggle between Charles I and parliament, which resulted eventually in the civil war and in the just retribution upon Charles. It was not any abstract issue; it was not any academic question. It was this question and this alone: shall the government be entitled to dip into the pockets of the people apart from authority expressed by parliament in terms of statute?

As you will remember, Mr. Chairman, the Petition of Right in 1628 was the ultimatum presented by the long parliament to Charles I, and leading among the issues presented in that Petition of Right was this, set out in section 1:

And other the good laws and statutes of this realm, your subjects have inherited this freedom, that they should not be compelled to contribute to any tax, tallage, aid, or other like charge, not set by common consent in parliament.

Charles I assented to that Petition of Right, but of course he and others who followed him forgot that obligation, just as this government has forgotten it, and it remained for blood to be shed again half a century later, culminating in the Bill of Rights in 1689, in which you will find these objectives set out, which I commend to those on the other side. Of course it is no use offering them to the government, because the government is blind and its ears are stopped to anything offered to it in the name of respect for constitutional usage. But in case there may be some private members opposite who still have some respect for liberalism, the small "I" liberalism they profess, I quote it and ask them to give heed to these words in the Bill of Rights of 1689, forming a part of the constitutional fabric of this country as well as of the United Kingdom. This is one of the wrongs referred to in the Bill of Rights which that bill was intended to rectify:

By levying money for and to the use of the crown, by pretence of prerogative, for other time and in other manner than the same was granted by parliament.

The Bill of Rights then proceeded to declare:

That the levying of money for or to the use of the crown by pretence of prerogative without grant of parliament for a longer time or in other manner than the same is or shall be granted is illegal.

It is on the strength of that Bill of Rights that every reigning sovereign in the United