

opposite were sitting over on this side of the house, professed Liberals as they are. In that case, the language used on this side of the house tonight would have been mute compared to the rafter-ringing eloquence we would have heard from the Liberal members about the sacredness of the constitution.

Mr. GRANT: They would have been better speakers.

Mr. KNOWLES: I would suggest to hon. members opposite that if they have any doubt about their ability to make good speeches on the constitution, if they have any modesty—and they are not revealing it at this moment—they go back to *Hansard* for the period from 1930 to 1935. I suggest that they study in particular the debate on what was known in that period as Mr. Bennett's blank cheque legislation. Led by their leader, a professed Liberal, they devoted pages and pages of *Hansard* to denouncing the unconstitutionality of that legislation proposed by Mr. Bennett. I suggest that this is no subject for the kind of derision that is being revealed on the opposite side tonight. I suggest, in fact, that the laughter and the attempt to slough off this issue is an indication that their consciences are being pricked. It means that there are still a few small "I" liberals among the big "L" Liberals, and they realize that this practice is completely unconstitutional.

The Minister of Finance has tried to base his whole argument, in defence of what he has done, on the ground that there is not a great deal of difference between an announcement of tax changes over the radio two weeks before parliament meets and an announcement of such changes in the house itself. The hon. member for Lake Centre pointed out that there is a considerable difference, but my colleague the hon. member for Kindersley has gone on to indicate, on the basis of a study he has made of British parliamentary practice, that even to impose at the time when it is announced in the house a tax that has not yet been passed by parliament is unconstitutional.

It is all right to shout that there was a situation which demanded it. Expediency is never an excuse for departing from the constitutional way of doing things, and I submit that what this situation calls for is serious attention by the government to the case which the hon. member for Kindersley reported here tonight. It seems to me that, on the basis of the experience in 1913 in the United Kingdom, we should have here on our statute books a general law giving the government powers of

this kind within a limited period such as is set out in the United Kingdom legislation.

I do not think there is any doubt as to the validity of the case which the hon. member for Kindersley made, that the collecting of any tax before it has been passed by parliament is invalid, even though it may have been announced in parliament by a resolution referred to the committee of ways and means. I call on liberal members opposite—liberal members with a small "I"—to take this matter with the seriousness it deserves and deal with it in their own caucus if they are not prepared to deal with it on the floor of the house, and try to help those of us who are fighting for a principle on this side of the house to get back to the proper constitutional way of doing things.

I have before me a paper which does not support the government, but that does not matter. Some other papers can express good ideas now and then, and this one is the *Montreal Gazette* of February 26, 1948, in which there appears an editorial under the title "Democracy of Deviations Unsound." As a matter of fact I commend to small "I" liberals the reading of the whole editorial, but there are one or two sentences in particular that I should like to call to the attention of the committee tonight. To begin with, I will quote the last paragraph, which reads:

All those in parliament and out of it who work for the preservation of democratic procedures of government are not engaged in a dreary pedantry.

That is what hon. members opposite think the opposition is doing, but it is not. To continue:

They are those who realize that the best way to preserve freedom is never to admit a precedent for taking it away.

Let me go back and read one or two other sentences. After discussing the tendency for things to be done by the boys in the back room and pointing out that this is not a good practice, even though the boys in the back room may for the time being be good democrats, the *Gazette* says this:

And when voices then are raised for the democratic ways to be followed, they seem to speak, not only out of turn, but out of time, and to be trying to call back old and outmoded things, long since shattered by other usages.

I regard it as tragic that it is possible in this day and age in Canada for editorials like that to be written, and that it is possible for a responsible newspaper editor to feel that there is something out of turn and out of time when people call for strict observance of the democratic and constitutional way of doing things. I will not take longer to read other quotations