

Emergency Powers Act

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I confess that I am in difficulty because I understood you to say that you objected, not to the quotation of an editorial opinion on the subject but of an editorial opinion as to statements made by people in this house. I submit that I have not been doing that except possibly in the case of the first editorial. I now come to the *Ottawa Citizen* where the editorial is of the same nature according to my view. I will read it for your approval or otherwise. It reads:

In 1950 and 1951, shortly after the fighting in Korea began, most Canadians would have agreed that a state of apprehended war did indeed exist. The government was obliged then to exercise special power to rule by order in council in the interest of security. But there is some doubt, at least in parliament, that a state of "apprehended war" still exists. It is a shifty definition of an emergency, changing with the times, and meaning almost whatever the government wants it to mean.

This was disclosed in Wednesday's debate. Mr. Garson, the Minister of Justice, said—

Perhaps I should pass over that. I continue:

This seems to mean that in the government's view, unrest anywhere in the world—

I should have said that the reference was to the Minister of Justice's worry about unrest in South Africa:

This seems to mean that in the government's view, unrest anywhere in the world results in a state of "apprehended war", is a threat to Canada's security, and warrants passage of the Emergency Powers Act. Yet surely this cannot be what the government actually means. Clarification of the circumstances which would justify the Emergency Powers Act is badly needed. Otherwise, a Canadian government could seek very wide powers on the ground that oil expropriation in Iran, disturbances in Bolivia or—

Mr. Garson: On a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that the hon. member is now raising a point which is argumentative as between somebody outside the house and somebody in the house.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I will pass that over.

Mr. Garson: I was not objecting to my hon. friend's quoting from the newspaper; I was objecting to the substance of what he was saying which does not correctly represent my viewpoint on the matter. I must repudiate what he is quoting.

Mr. Speaker: That is the difficulty which arises when the opinion of someone outside the house is quoted with respect to what an hon. member has said in the house. That is what I am endeavouring to prevent.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): It is all subject to your approval. I just read a short paragraph and I shall continue with the closing paragraph from the *Ottawa Citizen*

[Mr. Speaker.]

which I think will escape your ruling. It reads:

The world being what it is, there will always be an excuse to ask for emergency powers, whether the threat to Canada's security is real or fancied. This cannot be what parliament wants.

Here is one from the *London Free Press* of February 9 which I think is all right.

It is strange that Canada should be re-enacting wartime emergency powers at the same time Washington is freeing its economy from wartime controls. The Emergency Powers Act, which was passed in Ottawa after the outbreak of the Korean conflict, runs out on May 31, and the government is asking that it be extended for another year. All opposition parties object to this, largely on the grounds that there is no definite emergency, and that the government has used the emergency powers for purposes that might well be served by regular legislative channels.

That is not editorial comment on the merits of this bill; it is a statement referring to opposition parties in the house.

Mr. Speaker: It is something in the editorial columns, but it is more or less a news item, and I do not think I should permit the hon. member to continue.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I am sorry, Mr. Speaker; I thought it was quite free from the difficulty of comment from this or that member, and that it was a general statement. However, I will leave the matter and quote from a short paragraph which occurs later.

Mr. Sinnott: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On three or four occasions you have requested the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell) to refrain from reading from newspapers but he continues to do so. I would like the house rules adhered to.

Mr. Ferguson: Beauchesne, 3,444!

Mr. Speaker: I have never ruled that no extracts whatsoever could be read.

An hon. Member: He would not understand anyway.

Mr. Speaker: I think the house understands the rule.

Mr. Hees: Not the member for Springfield (Mr. Sinnott).

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the hon. member for Greenwood does, and I will leave it with him.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I thought the hon. member for Springfield would have realized that I was trying very, very hard to fit myself into your ruling and read nothing to which you would object. There is just a short paragraph from the *London Free Press* which I think is all right. It is an expression of editorial opinion.

It would seem as though there is some wisdom in the opposition plea that emergency powers