

Defence Production Act

the blank cheque legislation of that day, which was a period of one year. That was to be brought before parliament once every year, but this legislation can go on forever.

The *Montreal Gazette* of July 5, referring to this debate, said it was unfortunate that the minister who had served his country so well in wartime should impair his reputation by going one foot too far. They stated that this legislation was going a little too far and more or less reprimanded the minister for it. The minister has said that the time limit of five years could be adopted by him only with the full knowledge that another extension would be necessary. We all know that an extension of this legislation would be necessary. The minister could come back to parliament and ask for an extension, and I do not think there would be any doubt about his getting it. But there should be a time limit, and not too long a limit either.

The minister went on to say something about supersonic planes, guided missiles, and hydrogen bombs as examples of why he should have these powers. I do not think that is any argument for an indefinite period of time. New instruments of war will be invented; probably greater things will come along in the future, and an extension of this legislation will be needed. We need a permanent Department of Defence Production, but at the same time I feel that the control over the manufacture of war munitions and machines should be in parliament, and parliament should have the opportunity to review this every two or three years and give its sanction. If that is not done then the minister will have the power for all time, no matter who he might be. Governments change and people change, and for that reason I submit that this bill should have a time limit.

I should like to refer briefly to a speech made by one of the younger members of parliament, the hon. member for Brantford (Mr. Brown), and I quote from page 5705 of *Hansard* of July 5 as follows:

I believe we are living in very critical times, and I believe most hon. members would agree with that statement. I would say we are living in the face of a world emergency, and that our dear land of Canada is right in the middle of it. Who can tell how long the emergency will last? Who will dare say at this juncture that we should relax, so far as defence production activities are concerned? Will these conditions exist for two more years? Will they exist for three more years, or five? I am sure none of us knows. In the meantime we cannot afford to let the Department of Defence Production Act lapse. No one is asking that; but we cannot afford to let defence production itself lapse, nor to allow the act to come within a year of lapsing. For that reason alone I support the bill.

That is a true statement, but a sort of ridiculous one. No one in this house has asked that the Department of Defence Production

lapse. This parliament or this country cannot afford to let that department lapse. We must go ahead with our defence program; we must have munitions and tools to supply that program. The very fact that we are prepared may be the means of bringing about a lasting peace. We tried before with disarmament but the peace lasted for only a short period of time. As I said before, a good Department of National Defence and a good Department of Defence Production to supply the tools may be the means of bringing about a lasting peace. Then the hon. member continued:

—is there anyone in the house who will say that the powers contained in the Defence Production Act should be allowed to lapse at this time.

Nobody has even suggested that. No member of this party has suggested that sort of thing. Then the hon. member continued:

—if for no other reason, I propose that I shall support the bill and vote against the amendment.

I cannot see where the hon. member advanced any reason why he should not support the amendment rather than vote against it. Some hon. members will say these things cannot happen here, but they have happened in other countries. Once there was a man named Mussolini who rose to powers by means quite similar to this act. This is merely the thin edge of the wedge. When he got control of one of the old and great countries, he was coaxed, pleaded with and talked to by Sir Winston Churchill and asked not to take his country into the war. In spite of the pleading and everything else he took his country into the war, and we know that as a result his country was rent asunder, as Churchill had predicted to him.

Some people might say we did well in the last war in building a war machine. Our war machine was something like the Minister of Defence Production's "what's a million dollars?" We could not build a trans-Canada highway without help. The Americans built the biggest part of the trans-Canada highway, and it was used for the transportation of goods and services. Airplanes flew over it when going to take supplies to Russia. Some members of parliament might not know it, but if they are in Edmonton I would ask them to look at the log book in the Edmonton airport, and they will see there what happened when the Germans were turned back at Stalingrad. For four long months an average of 423 planes a day went to Russia through the Edmonton airport.

Hitler built a great war machine. Members of parliament will agree that it was the greatest war machine ever known in the history of man. He rose to power quickly. He was not even heard of in 1920, but in