

*Emergency Powers Act*

support the emergency powers how were they going to get the controls they were then advocating?

**Mr. Fleming:** They could not support that bill after they saw it.

**Mr. Garson:** My hon. friends from the C.C.F. and Social Credit parties say that they are not against the principle of these emergency powers, but they supported them in 1951 and, if I understood my hon. friend the leader of the C.C.F. party the other day, he would be inclined to support them now if we would only use them.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Well, that is when parliament is not sitting—and if you used them in the interests of the people of Canada. I mean use when parliament is not sitting.

**Mr. Garson:** When parliament is not sitting. So, my hon. friends of the C.C.F. and Social Credit parties are not opposed to the matter in principle. They are voting against it—if they do vote against it—not because they feel that we were wrong in seeking the powers but because we have not used the powers in the manner in which they thought we would use them. That is very different from opposing the emergency powers in principle.

Now, I would say to them that for all they know and for all we know, we in a government such as ours which, frankly, does not believe in controls if they can be avoided may be faced within another three weeks, six weeks or nine weeks with the iron necessity of introducing some limited measure of control over some segment of industry. I want to ask my hon. friends of the C.C.F. and Social Credit parties whether they think, in accordance with principles which they have enunciated and the support which they have given this measure on previous occasions, it is a consistent principle with them to say to the government now: Because you, as a majority elected by the democratic votes of the Canadian people, have not exercised these powers in the way in which we, in the minority, have said you should exercise them, we should go so far as we can to take them away from you—so that you will not have them to meet an emergency or exigency if it arises.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Garson:** Is that a consistent course to follow? I submit not, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Coldwell:** Is the minister asking me a question?

**Mr. Garson:** Yes.

**Mr. Coldwell:** The hon. gentleman states he does not believe in the principle of this measure, yet he is asking for power under it.

[Mr. Garson.]

Having received that power once, he failed to use it in the interests of the Canadian people. That is why we say: If you do not believe in the principle of controls, and as you have not used the powers we gave you, then why should we renew these powers so that you may use them against the people?

**Mr. Garson:** I am sure that my hon. friend misrepresents the position when he says we do not believe in controls.

**Mr. Drew:** You just said that.

**Mr. Ross (Souris):** Yes, the minister has just finished saying that.

**Mr. Garson:** As a matter of fact, this government in the period of the war, when circumstances were such as to warrant a system of control, had one of the most thoroughgoing and successful systems of controls in the civilized world.

**Mr. Fleming:** Under the War Measures Act.

**Mr. Garson:** Yes, quite right, under the War Measures Act. However, from the fact that we do not, under present circumstances, concur with my hon. friend in thinking that we should now put in a system of controls pursuant to these powers it does not by any means follow that circumstances in the kind of world in which we live today might not arise, under which a month from now we would think it just as necessary to put in controls as we did on previous occasions.

**Mr. Fleming:** Would the minister be good enough to indicate circumstances under which he conceives that might be necessary?

**Mr. Garson:** Mr. Speaker, I said before and I repeat again that the asking of a question of that kind indicates that the questioner does not understand the basic characteristics of emergency legislation. The real reason that we have to have emergency powers is precisely the fact that we are not able, not being prophets, to prophesy what exigency may arise under which the emergency powers will be necessary. If we could prophesy that, then it is quite true that we could bring down amendments to our existing statutes and we would not need the emergency powers at all.

**An hon. Member:** He knows that.

**Mr. Garson:** Why does my hon. friend think the War Measures Act, passed in 1915, with much greater powers than the Emergency Powers Act which he is getting so indignant about, has remained on the statute books since that date, even in times of genuine peace? It is because, when you have to deal with war or any other serious emergency, it is impossible to foretell the circumstances you will have to face. A man who would be simple enough to answer the type