

*Defence Production Act*

We must remember that we were at war when the munitions and supply act was in operation, but now we are supposed to be in a peacetime period. The powers granted under the Defence Production Act are far-reaching and certainly should not be given to an individual for all time to come. Surely some limit should be placed on this act with regard to time and with regard to its sections. One section of the act provides that the minister may requisition any materials he thinks necessary for defence, and may seize them under court order if the owner refuses to give them up.

We must remember that any contract given by the Department of Defence Production would be considered a defence contract whether it was in wartime, peacetime or any other time. Rightly or wrongly, the minister would have the right at any time to step into a plant and not only take it over but seize the materials in that plant and use them as he saw fit. Heads of industry across Canada have told me that the present minister has been extremely fair in his dealings, as he should be, and has not been too unreasonable in the past. But do you, Mr. Speaker, or does any hon. member know who the next minister of defence production is going to be. We do not know.

We would like to know just what is what. It may be the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin). I think he would be reasonably fair and try to do a good job and not be partisan in his handling of the department. It might be the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson).

**Mr. Pearson:** Highly unlikely.

**Mr. Fraser (Peterborough):** It might be the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris), or it might be some other individual who would be biased by politics above everything else. Just a week ago a federal building was opened in Peterborough. It was not the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Winters) who did the inviting to that affair or the Postmaster General (Mr. Cote) or his deputy; it was some outside individual entirely. The hon. member for Kingston (Mr. Henderson), the hon. member for Hastings South (Mr. Follwell), the hon. member for Northumberland, Ont. (Mr. Robertson), the hon. member for Durham (Mr. James) were among those invited.

What I am getting at is that those Liberal members were from outside the riding, some of them being at least 125 miles away. But the hon. member for Hastings-Frontenac (Mr. White), a Conservative member, was not invited though he represented half of Peterborough county. The hon. member for Victoria, Ont. (Mr. Hodgson), a Conservative

member who represents the adjoining riding, was not invited. I am sorry that took place, because it was not a pleasant thing to have happen. But I think it offers proof of what I am trying to say, that we might get a minister of defence production who was completely biased.

**Mr. Hodgson:** Was there not a senator present?

**Mr. Fraser (Peterborough):** There was a senator from Trenton; he ran the works. But the whole thing backfired on the Liberal party, because since that time I have had three dyed-in-the-wool Grits come to me and say, "Gordon, in future we are voting Conservative; we cannot stand anything of that kind." One man asked me for a membership in the association and he is now a member, and the other two are joining.

The average taxpayer is getting pretty well fed up with the controls that have been placed not only on industry but on the individual. No matter where you turn you run into a control of some kind that either shoves you ahead or holds you back. There is a limit to what the public can stand. This bill certainly is something they do not want unless a time limit of from three to five years is placed on these powers and there is some easement in some of the sections of the act.

The bill which the minister insists on passing looks to be an extremely innocent piece of legislation. It is only 11 lines long. Two of those lines have only one word each. But the real meaning of the whole bill lies in the last line. That last line just says, "Section 41—".

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. The hon. member will please not read the clause in the bill.

**Mr. Fraser (Peterborough):** Very well, Your Honour. As I said, that does not sound dangerous at all. When they say this section is to be repealed it sounds as if something is being taken away from the Defence Production Act. But the only thing that is being taken away from the Defence Production Act is the time limit, July 31, 1956. If this bill goes through we will have that act until the world's end.

The Conservative party has at no time said that this department should not continue to function. We are in favour of this department, but some of its powers must be curtailed or, as I said before, they should be modified and a time limit placed in the bill. The minister said he was bored before—

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** I have a call.