

*Northern Ontario Pipe Line Corporation*

The act of 1932, when closure was moved under a blanket motion such as we have now, was an act respecting unemployment and farm relief. That was an act which had as its purpose the validating of certain steps taken under the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act, 1931, following the expiry date of that act on the first day of March, 1932, and making all the various steps that had been taken valid and also continuing the act in full force and effect. It was simply in its purpose the continuance on the statute books, with such necessary other powers as there might be, of the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act of 1931.

There was not much question in anyone's mind about the necessity of continuing the act. There were certain discussions as to the details with regard to the procedure, but the whole core of the act that was before the house, the whole weight of the argument, rested on the discussion of section 1. Sections 2 and 3 only referred to the placing of all orders in council and regulations made under the provisions of the act before the house and also providing that the Unemployment and Farm Relief Act, 1931, and this act, that is, the act of 1932, should be read and construed as one act.

In other words, sections 2 and 3 were simply definitive sections which followed in the natural course of events from section 1. Section 1 had been discussed; and I am not going to argue about the desirability of this precedent. As we look back on this precedent of 1932 we realize how dangerous it is to move from one precedent to another which narrows and restricts the rights of parliament. In this case, if there are objections to the arguments that were made in support of this procedure, they can be made on the ground and only on the ground that sections 2 and 3 had not been considered within the meaning of the rules because they had in fact not been discussed separately. I certainly do not like the wrapping together of sections in this way but at least it can be said that in discussing section 1 of the act in 1932 the effect of sections 2 and 3 was embraced in that discussion. In any event, it was simply an act continuing another act already on the statute books and in three short sections making such provisions as were appropriate for the continuance of that act.

This is a very different situation, different in every way. Section 1 was not discussed. Section 1 was not considered in any ordinary meaning of the word "considered". Whether "consider" means to discuss or to examine or to debate, in this case there was none. The section was called and it was

postponed. The same applied to section 2 and the same applied to section 3. Then for the first time we came to section 4 and there was some discussion but only then under the limitations of having passed over the earlier sections.

The Prime Minister made the extraordinary contention this afternoon that there was in fact no difference in the situation resulting from the absence of any consideration of section 1. Mr. Chairman, by practice and by tradition the first section is the section where discussion can take place, where there can be questions and answers, and it opens the broad discussion of the legislation generally. That was denied to us. So also was any discussion of section 2, and when the Prime Minister says, with some suggestion of a desire to meet the wishes of the members, that he thought we might well discuss the later sections, that really is the unkindest cut of all.

After all, here were section 2 and section 3 that were important sections and we were not allowed to discuss them. We got into section 4 without even having had a chance to define what the words meant that were going to be used in the act or to know what kind of corporation it was that we were going to discuss in section 4. The two situations are entirely different. No matter how far one may strain the application of the decision in 1932, Mr. Chairman, I submit that it would be straining the English language in a way that would make any ruling a mere fiction if it were said that the precedent of 1932 was justification for the acceptance of the motion now before us. That would be so even if it were said that there has been consideration of all the sections of this measure in the limited debate that has taken place on one section after closure on section 1, closure on section 2, closure on section 3 and no opportunity whatever even to have sections 5, 6 and 7 brought before us.

No, Mr. Chairman, there is no possible parallel between the two cases. It would be a shameless distortion of the meaning of simple and understandable words if it were said that those words embraced such a procedure as that which we have here and I submit, Mr. Chairman, that you now have it in your hands to restore to this parliament some of the dignity, some of the honour, some of the tradition which have been the rich heritage of those who now sit here as the successors of those who built a great institution over the years since 1867. Upon you is now imposed the opportunity and the responsibility to return to this house the meaning of words in the language that we use and to give to those words a sensible and understandable meaning that does not