

*Transitional Measures Act*

takes measures that will interfere with the rights of the people and affect those rights far more than anything that will be done by direct action on the part of this parliament. That, sir, is a fundamentally wrong method; and I submit that it is high time parliament made up its mind that it will not any longer countenance such things. Where measures are required, as in this case they are, in respect of rent control, this parliament should take that responsibility; and parliament should reserve to itself, and to itself alone, the right to change, modify or terminate those measures. It should not be left to the whim of the government.

The minister invites us to accept, in lieu of or as a substitute for proper legislation, in a matter of high importance to the people of Canada, statements of intention on the part of the government. Let us consider the history of some such statements in the past. Sir, you and I well remember the statement made in this house in 1946, found at page 2547 of *Hansard* of that year, in which the then minister of finance, Mr. Ilsley, in relation to a measure then before the house with regard to foreign exchange control, said:

We have no intention of using this exchange control legislation to restrict anything but certain types of capital movement.

That certainly was a clear statement on the part of the government. What was the result? When it suited the government in November, 1947, to use powers in defiance of that assurance given to the house, powers which they purported to find in the very measure which was then under comment by Mr. Ilsley, they exercised those powers and, if you please, did it by radio decree without the slightest consultation of parliament. In a matter of such paramount importance to hundreds of thousands of Canadians, is it to be assumed by this house that the statement made by the Minister of Finance today will be given any higher regard or effect by the government when it suits their purposes at some future time to qualify it or to disregard it entirely, or that they will pay any more attention to it than was paid by the same government to this strong statement made by Mr. Ilsley in 1946?

You will not have forgotten, sir—and I am sure the house will not have forgotten—that when the present Minister of Finance was pressed in the house about that statement made by his predecessor in the same portfolio, an assurance that he himself was simply throwing overboard and was in effect completely repudiating, his answer was that it was only a statement that Mr. Ilsley made; he said that it was not a binding undertaking given to the house, but only a statement.

[Mr. Fleming.]

In the face of that experience, the same minister today asks us to accept, as a substitute for proper legislation, a statement on his part of the intention of the government in relation to circumstances as they appear to him to exist now. I say to you, sir, that this parliament cannot accept that statement made by the minister today as any substitute for proper legislation.

Then, sir, the Minister of Finance is not alone in the estimate that he places upon statements or assurances emanating from the government. I well recall that in this house a year ago, when a statement was made by the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. McCann) in which he announced that it was the policy of the government to ask the house to approve a loan of \$4 million to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for the development of television in Canada, I rose and asked him this question, as reported at page 2837 of *Hansard*:

Will the radio committee have an opportunity of reviewing this policy and reporting to the house before the house is called upon to approve the loan of \$4 million.

The answer of the minister was: "The answer is definitely yes." You will find that recorded in *Hansard*. That was a direct and categorical statement, one would have thought. If statements by the government are treated seriously by the government, one could not have asked for a more categorical statement than that one. But what happened to that statement? In December of last year it suited the purposes of the government to ignore that promise completely, to repudiate it, and to push through this house the same loan without the radio committee having been appointed or ever having had the opportunity to make the study which it had been promised that the committee should make before the government would ask the house to approve this loan of \$4 million to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for that purpose.

Now, sir, there are other instances. I think those two are sufficient to indicate the estimate which the government puts upon its own statements to the house. And if the house or the country, in the face of the repudiation of those statements by the government when it suited their purpose, chooses to attach to the statement made by the Minister of Finance today some efficacy in substitution for proper legislation, then, sir, the responsibility will rest on those who are prepared to put in jeopardy the rights of Canadians by hundreds of thousands.

I say to you, sir, that parliament in a matter so important, must not continue the hodgepodge of sweeping arbitrary powers contained in this act. It dare not ignore its responsibility to enact clear legislation that