

*Emergency Powers Act*

constant reminders in this national forum, from which reports go out that help to shape the opinions of people throughout the country, and constant warnings that we must never consent to abandon the democratic forms that have been won, through centuries, for the common people in our free democracies.

But we in the government have the responsibility of watching over the safety and security of the state. We hope we will have no more occasion to use emergency powers than we have had in the past, just as we hope we will have no occasion to use those forces being built up by ourselves and the 13 nations associated with us in the North Atlantic alliance. Nevertheless times are such that we do not dare do without the upbuilding of those forces. We do not dare do without the power and responsibility to do such things as might be required for the safety of the state.

Reference has been made to the words of the constitution—"act for the peace, order and good government of the country". Well, the government cannot do that. That is a general power given to the Canadian parliament. The government can act only if it has a delegation from parliament to do so. And this emergency power is a delegation by parliament to do that which might be necessary for the peace, order and good government of the country.

We hope there will be no occasion to use it. But we feel that, having the responsibility of watching over the security of the country in these troubled times, the power to act promptly and effectively should exist. No one can challenge the right and propriety of any hon. member at this time to say that in his opinion the situation is not sufficiently grave to warrant or to require this measure, whatever may have been his views in previous years. We have become a little bit inured to the existence of the cold war, and there are moments when we are inclined to regard the situation as fairly calm and stable. I think that was the frame of mind of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew) when, speaking in the house on February 20, he said:

We are asked to declare that it is expedient that emergency legislation of this kind should be re-enacted. Not one argument has been placed before us to demonstrate why it is expedient. Not one illustration of any kind has been submitted to the members of this house to indicate why the government needs this emergency legislation, and could not deal with any situation that might arise by the ordinary processes of parliament.

Then three weeks later, on March 13, as reported at page 2952 of *Hansard*, he expressed this warning:

These are grave and serious hours. The news that comes to us from Europe today removes any

suggestion that we are in a comfortable period where there are no great dangers in front of us. The events of yesterday and today, the cold-blooded murder of British airmen and the interference with the flight of a civilian aircraft going into Berlin, indicate the extent of the danger which is there all the time.

And it is there all the time. We are becoming used to living under this threat. Nevertheless the threat is there; and we believe that, just as it is necessary to continue to recommend to parliament the appropriation of more than two billions of dollars to provide for our part of the strength that is being built up by ourselves and our associates, because of that threat, likewise we feel it is advisable to have the power which the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) implied might exist in the government to do those things required for peace, order and good government.

This cannot be done without a delegation of power; and we think that the delegation of power does not destroy the power of parliament and does not diminish the power of parliament, but rather that it is an exercise of the power of parliament that the circumstances still justify and still make it prudent to have in existence.

Hon. members have said: Tell us the circumstances in which this power would be used. Well, if we could do that we would not need emergency powers. It is just because we cannot foresee what will happen and what may arise, or what may have to be dealt with, that the emergency power was granted in the first place and, in our view, continues to be a proper precaution to take under existing circumstances.

There have been references to a secret order. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Drew), the leader of the C.C.F. group (Mr. Coldwell) and I think the leader of the Social Credit group (Mr. Low) have said that they had not seen the order. That is quite true. We had to pass the order, and take the responsibility for passing it. But I mentioned what it was. I am not sure whether I spoke to the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart or whether, in his absence, I spoke to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). However, I did mention to one or other of them, as I mentioned to the Leader of the Opposition and to the leader of the Social Credit party, what the order dealt with, and what the order that was going to be tabled, showing that it had been exempted from publication, referred to.

I did not feel at that time, nor was it suggested to me by any of the three of them, that I should ask them to take the responsibility of considering the order. However, it is an