

Defence Production Act

extent as might be possible, offers us the opportunity to express our complaint.

We do not need that. We have that right under the supply motions, and we have not yet been deprived of it. That still continues within this house. This proposal is utterly meaningless. It is an example of the way in which the government is refusing to live up to its clear undertaking—and it was nothing less—that these powers would not be continuing powers, and is refusing to incorporate in the legislation the appropriate amendment which would reduce the powers which the government itself described as excessive.

In the time that remains to me before I adjourn this debate until tomorrow, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to one other thing that constantly comes up. Over and over again we are told about the emergency. There is no need to debate whether or not there is an emergency. This is not an emergency act. That is the very danger of this act. If this were in fact an emergency act which recited the emergency, then possibly the courts might declare at some time that no emergency did exist to justify the continuance of the act.

This act is straight, permanent legislation, referring at no point to a real or implied emergency; consequently it goes on the statute books as legislation under the broad provision of defence under the British North America Act. For that reason this law would stand as the law of the land and could be enforced to override provincial jurisdiction. In fact it could be used to do exactly as we said before, to suspend the constitution, if at any time it were the whim of the minister charged with the responsibility of administering this act.

It is nothing less than that. This should properly be described as an act to suspend the constitution. Never mind whether that is the intention of the government. We are not asked to try to look into the brains of the government. They have enough trouble finding out what is in their brains themselves, and enough difficulty in expressing it; otherwise we would not have had some of the confusion that has been incorporated in this act. No, it is not our task to look into the brains of the members of the government and find out what is their intention and their thinking. Our task is—

Mr. Pickersgill: There is something to be said for having brains to look into.

[Mr. Drew.]

Mr. Drew: Oh, oh. I wonder whether the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration would like to have all these powers. He did not need them to deal with Mr. Pitt. He is one minister I would not want to see entrusted with these powers. I mention that because his interjection indicated exactly why hon. members should look at the legislation. They should not be inquiring what this minister or that minister thinks, but rather what could be done by any government under this act.

Mr. Rowe: Any minister.

Mr. Drew: That is the proper question before this house, and only the answer to that question will properly place before hon. members their own responsibility to the fundamental principles of democracy, of parliament and the rule of law.

May I move the adjournment of the debate?

On motion of Mr. Drew the debate was adjourned.

PRIVILEGE

MR. DINSDALE—REFERENCE TO STATEMENT IN DEBATE BY HON. MEMBER FOR DAUPHIN

Mr. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of personal privilege. During the latter part of the afternoon I was absent from the house recording a radio speech. I am informed that during my absence the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Zaplitny) made reference to some remarks I was supposed to have made in Arborg, Manitoba, during a by-election last fall.

Fortunately I saw the Canadian Press release to which he referred. It appeared in the newspapers on Saturday, November 6. I immediately saw the implication of the remarks and that it would be possible to misunderstand what I had said on that occasion. I believe the gist of it was that it would be better to send a communist than another Liberal to the dominion house here in Ottawa. Realizing the possibilities of misunderstanding, I sat down immediately and wrote to the editors of each of the Manitoba dailies, the *Brandon Sun*, the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Winnipeg Tribune*, and I should like with your permission to put the contents of that letter on the record. The date is November 8.

An hon. Member: Ten o'clock.