

*Official Secrets Act*

The people of Peace River are not frightened about the economy of the entire world sliding down hill, for they are strong and they know that with good government the country will continue to grow and develop. The people of Peace River are not afraid of global war because they know that is in the hands of God and not something they should worry about. They shall always voice their dismay at any war and they will always be ready to stand and defend their country, their Canada, from enemies which may threaten our borders.

What the people of Peace River fear is none of these things. They fear more than anything Canada's present federal government. This is a well-informed electorate and the people realize all too well the inherent dangers the entire nation faces today, particularly now when they hear members of the Trudeau administration talking about federal unilateral action on the constitution with referenda rigged in order that the federal government may bypass the people's chosen representatives in provincial legislatures.

The people of Peace River listen with astonishment as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources tells people across the country that Albertans are villains, greedy culprits wanting to ruin the nation. They listen closely when the Prime Minister talks of how much he wishes to uphold the rights of Canadians and of how he wants to enshrine a bill of rights in the constitution, yet they are astounded when they hear this same Prime Minister saying it will be possible for these enshrined rights to be taken away through the federally-initiated mechanism of a referendum.

Members of the government say they will not take away the rights they will so graciously grant us. They tell us it is the people alone who will be able to take our rights away through this referendum mechanism. Looking back to 1970 it is possible to see what a fallacy this is. If the country had been put to a referendum at that time on whether the War Measures Act should be invoked I think the government would have found the support it needed. I will return to this subject in a moment.

First I should like to examine the real reason the federal government so badly wants the referenda clause inserted in the constitution. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is nothing but a means for this government to turn this country into a wholly unitary state. The people of my constituency are alarmed at this prospect for they know this country cannot function as a unitary state. They are not the only ones who realize this fact. If I may, I should like to refer the House to a quotation from a statement by one of the elder statesmen of this place. He said:

—a unitary state simply will not work in Canada. Theoretically . . . a unitary state enables a country to deal with problems more quickly, more simply as they arise. But if it means breaking up the country, what kind of efficiency is that?

● (1610)

I wonder if the Right Hon. Prime Minister remembers saying those words. If not, *Hansard* of April 25, 1969, will serve to refresh his memory. Now the Prime Minister proposes to patriate the constitution unilaterally and he proposes to insert a clause enabling him to bypass the provincial govern-

ments. By doing so, he sets a very dangerous precedent; we all know that once power is taken, it is seldom if ever given back.

I wonder whether the Prime Minister has changed his mind since he pointed out the dangers of a unitary state over ten years ago. Does he now believe that a unitary state is not as dangerous as it was a decade ago? If he does believe this, then I and the people of Peace River must protest. By adopting this "deadlock-breaking mechanism", as the Prime Minister likes to refer to his section 42 of the Pierre Elliott Trudeau act, he is in fact bypassing the people's chosen regional representatives, and therefore he is setting up the initial step towards turning this country into a truly unitary state.

Once again I would refer the House to a statement the Prime Minister made about four years ago. On April 9, 1976, he told the nation, and again I quote:

I have raised the possibility that Parliament might seek to have patriation accomplished without provincial consent if that consent seems impossible to achieve. Clearly it would be a last resort and clearly it should not be on the basis that could affect the distribution of powers or the position of the provinces. I must not provide any means by which Parliament could act unilaterally in future in any area where it cannot do so today since that would erode the essence of our federal system.

Yet is that not what he is doing right now? Is not section 42 of the constitutional resolution a means by which Parliament could act unilaterally in an area where it cannot do so today? And therefore would that not erode, as the Prime Minister himself indicated, the essence of our federal system? And, again according to the Prime Minister, would that not break up the country?

In looking to the future I can envisage a situation that would be considered a crisis, just as the events of October, 1970, were considered a crisis. I can envisage the federal government wanting to take advantage of the situation for political purposes, as it did in 1970.

The government would make a mountain out of a molehill, even though it would be a rather large molehill, just as it did in 1970 when the Hon. Jean Marchand stood up in the House and told the entire nation that there were over 3,000 terrorists in and around Montreal about to blow up the city and planning the overthrow of the national government. The truth of the matter, as has been shown in the recently-leaked Quebec government study, is that Marchand's statements were nothing more than a fabrication. I can see the government attempting some time in the future to whip the country into a frenzied panic in order that it may do what it wants, and in the way that it wants. The country will be goaded into believing that only the government can save it, just as happened in 1970. And the Official Secrets Act will be used to prevent any honest bureaucrat from coming forward with the truth for fear of being prosecuted.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, the people of the Peace country are worried. They do not wish to see the country destroyed. They do not wish to see the Government of Canada, in the name of a crisis, move unilaterally into areas which are not its to move in.

They do not wish the government to have police state powers as listed in the War Measures Act or in the Official Secrets