

Unemployment Continuance Act

to do is by forceful expression, forceful action and persistent debate, which has no reference whatever to the issue before us, to compel the house to accept the will of the small minority that surrounds him. That is government by minority, and when it comes to government by a minority attempting to exercise parliamentary rights and privileges, by constant reiteration and abuse of parliamentary privileges such as we have heard, there is no remedy except that which was adopted years ago by the mother of parliaments and which is exercised there day after day and week after week in the ordinary legislative proceedings of their house, and that is to invoke a closure which affords a proper time for argumentative debate but precludes a minority from exercising its physical force so as to prevent parliament from registering its decision on the question at issue before it.

My right hon. friend says that parliamentary government depends upon the rules of the house being handled in a reasonable way. Of course we agree with him in that, but has the right hon. gentleman during the past two or three weeks handled the rules of the house in a reasonable way? Has he been reasonable in the procedure which he has adopted? Can he justify, before the Canadian people or even before his associates and followers in the house, the course which he has adopted? I dislike to say this, but it is obvious, and I say to the right hon. gentleman that, so persistent has become his effort to preclude the majority from expressing its will that when he has spoken in the house on recent occasions, the most intellectual of his followers have abandoned their seats and gone to their rooms rather than listen to his reiterated arguments. Under the rules of the house handled in a reasonable way, hon. gentlemen have full opportunity to endorse those views which are usually expressed through the leader of their party who has wide and ample experience and a habit of speech that is extremely facile. Then if there are others who wish to speak, let them express their opinions, but why have this constant reiteration hour by hour, until not only parliament but the reading public of the whole country are as I said—

An hon. MEMBER: Disgusted.

Mr. CAHAN: —well, disgusted. I do not know whether that is parliamentary or not.

My intention in rising was to point out to the right hon. gentleman that in imperial legislation there are many precedents where this same procedure which he calls the revival of dead statutes has been followed by means [Mr. Cahan.]

of legislation expressed in almost exactly the same terms as those which are found in the bill before the house. As I should like to refer to this matter at some length, might I ask that it be called six o'clock.

At six o'clock the house took recess.

After Recess

The house resumed at eight o'clock.

PRIVATE BILLS

SECOND READING

Bill No. 37, to incorporate the Fort Smith-Fitzgerald Railway Company.—Mr. Irvine.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND FARM RELIEF

CONTINUANCE ACT, 1932—CONSIDERATION OF BILL

The house resumed consideration of the motion of Right Hon. R. B. Bennett (Prime Minister) for the third reading of Bill No. 24, respecting unemployment and farm relief.

Hon. C. H. CAHAN (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, when the house rose I was about to proceed to say with all sincerity that with regard to the form and content of this bill now before the house I have a larger responsibility than merely that of a member of the ministry, because I think that my own suggestions were carried out with respect to the form and content of this measure. In making those suggestions I was well within the limits of parliamentary practice in vogue in the parliament of the United Kingdom for many, many years. I have not the time to cite many precedents, but here is one to which I would like to direct the attention of the house.

In the year 1921, chapter 67 of the statutes of the United Kingdom for 1921 was passed. It was an act with this title: "An Act to make further provision with respect to the Metropolitan Common Poor Fund and with respect to rating and to the finance of certain local and public authorities." It was in the nature of an act for providing ways and means for relieving poverty in the metropolitan district. That act, by subsection 4 of section 1, provides:

This section shall continue in force until the thirty-first day of December, nineteen hundred and twenty-two, and no longer.

This statute therefore expired on the 31st of December, 1922, and yet on May 17, 1923, the parliament of the United Kingdom enacted