

Defence Production Act

opinion of any minister, examine the powers conferred by this act and ask yourselves whether we are doing as the Bill of Rights says, following what our ancestors in like case have usually done. Those people had the temerity—no, those people had the good judgment—to say that they respected the traditions of their ancestors, and respecting those traditions, they laid down certain rules in regard to the full authority of parliament, which we are transgressing if at this time we embed into the permanent laws of the land an act of this nature, with no time limit and with no restraint upon the powers conferred.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Back to Magna Carta again.

Mr. Drew: It would be helpful if the minister were to speak loud enough for me to hear, because I could then deal immediately with what he said.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Excuse me; I just said to a member who had just come in that we were back to Magna Carta.

Mr. Drew: Oh, the minister is not interested in Magna Carta nor is he interested in the laws of the present time, so long as he gets the powers he wants. The fact is that it is the powers he is asking for and the powers he demands that are keeping us here at this time. When there is any suggestion that we are here simply because of some whim of ours, let it be said once again that if the government had lived up to its word we would have dealt with this long ago. The government has broken its clear undertaking, and we are sitting here and taking part in this debate only because the government, having first of all said these powers should not be continued is now saying, on the demand of the Minister of Defence Production, "We must have all or nothing." That is the only reason we are still here.

If the right hon. minister is tired of hearing about Magna Carta, if he is tired of hearing about the Bill of Rights, if he is tired of hearing about the rule of law and the supremacy of parliament, then let him carry out the decent undertaking made by this government and this debate will come to an end just as simply as that.

An hon. Member: "Simply" is right.

Mr. Drew: That is all that is needed. There is no need for anything else. Just let the minister, for once, be prepared to operate under ordinary democratic laws, and the convenience of every member, including the minister himself, will be fully met.

Mr. Macdonnell: And no one can deny that.

[Mr. Drew.]

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): More than four and a half hours in one speech.

Mr. Lesage: Four and a half hours of repetition.

Mr. Drew: But, Mr. Speaker, I did not mention Magna Carta or the Bill of Rights before, but I am going to. As a matter of fact I have quite a lot more to deal with that I have not mentioned before.

An hon. Member: Get the Bible.

Mr. Lesage: Yes, read the whole Bible.

Mr. Drew: I accept the invitation to continue; I will keep going.

Mr. Lesage: Read the whole Bible if it will help.

Mr. Drew: When the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Lesage) says, "Read the Bible" I think that measures exactly the contribution he has made to this debate, when he brings in the most revered book in Christendom and suggests that it should be dealt with lightly in this way. That is typical of the interjections that have been made during this debate. I am reading textbooks that apply to temporal law.

Mr. Knowles: Are you dealing with them lightly?

Mr. Drew: No; and as a matter of fact I do not think the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, who has made the interjection, liked any more than I did the way the Bible was brought into the discussion at this time. At least I hope he did not.

Mr. Knowles: But it was the hon. gentleman who used the word "lightly".

Mr. Drew: Just because of the hon. member's recent conversion to the support of this government on this bill I hope he will not go that far.

I wish now to deal, and necessarily so, with the question of the presumption of guilt. It is perfectly clear that hon. members opposite are not even yet prepared to recognize that in this act there is a provision not paralleled in any other act we have, or in any relevant act of a corresponding nature in the democracies.

Mr. Richardson: May I ask the Leader of the Opposition a question? I wish to be fair. In this instance, as always, I have listened with great respect to the Leader of the Opposition. However, he said for the second time this afternoon that on this question of the burden of proof there is no other case; that it is unparalleled, as I understood him to say, in Canadian legislation. I would refer him, then, as well as my brother lawyers in