

similar agreement to this was made in the fall, around November, and approved by order in council to come into effect on January 1, as is the case of the present agreements. There was no change in the rules in order to discuss those matters. Parliament met later on, in January, February or March; the legislation was brought forward and passed. That has been done before; it could be done now.

So far as implementing these agreements is concerned, we did not need to be called together before Christmas.

As for the urgency of these particular measures, I suggest that there are many other questions before this country which are much more urgent than these and to which we ought to be giving attention. I suggest that there are four or five more urgent than a discussion of these matters. One is the rise in the cost of living; another is the unrest among workers as a result of the increasing cost of everything that they have to buy; another is the plight of the veterans; another is the perilous state into which government policies have brought the basic industry of this country, the industry of agriculture.

The farmers of Canada are mad today. In my fifty years of experience I have never seen so much anger on the part of farmers from one end of the country to the other, who feel that this government's policies have frozen their prices at the top and allowed their costs to go up. They feel that one action taken by this government in the very middle of the marketing season brought about conditions under which large numbers of farmers were forced to take low prices, and the next day others who had not marketed their crops received twenty or thirty cents a bushel more. The people of the country back home are demanding that their members present these matters before parliament.

The Prime Minister referred to this special powers measure which he proposed in his radio address on, I believe, November 17 last. May I say to the house that those measures are already in effect, illegally and unconstitutionally, but there they are. Already these policies have, I was going to say, murdered the constitution and shamefully flouted parliament. What happened last year? The Foreign Exchange Control Act was passed. At that time several ministers and several of their experts assured parliament time and again that that measure would not be used to restrict imports. Mr. Speaker, that measure has been used in fact to restrict imports.

The Minister of Finance took to the air on November 17 and announced to the radio audience that, while the government had not thought that those powers they used existed in that act, some legal authorities had informed them that the powers did exist there. That being the case, he said they would use them to do something for which they had told parliament they would not use them.

We should have had parliament in session at that time if the minister wanted to make those announcements. However, he said that his legal authorities had told him he had the power. In any event, what the government set out to do it did, and those measures are now in effect.

We are as anxious as anyone else to discuss this question as soon as we can, but I should like the house and the public to realize that these measures are now in effect as a result of that decision. They are just as much in effect as the decisions of the government brought down in the budget delivered by the Minister of Finance in which he says in effect, "These proposals will come into effect tonight though the bill dealing with them may not be passed for a couple of months". What happened was that the minister gave warning on the day he spoke that these measures would be in effect that night. He so warned the country and these measures are in force.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister mentioned one other matter, namely the existing transitional emergency powers act, a measure which, had we not met until next January, would continue in effect until March 31, but which, since we have met now in 1947, terminates at the end of this year. The Agricultural Products Act is in the same position. We cannot adequately discuss the merits of these measures even if we take nearly the whole of these two weeks. It cannot be done.

I am willing to sit down with the government and, without prejudice, discuss with them whether some arrangement can be made either to have a short debate or perhaps to have no debate at all on the extension until March 31, if one or the other can be arranged. In any event we shall be discussing this whole question next session. We recognize that either that measure has to be extended or it will terminate, and I think no one wants it to terminate before it has been discussed.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that what the people of Canada want is that we shall deal with those issues which they feel are really urgent. I suggest also that the discussion of these Geneva agreements is being brought on primarily for the purpose of sugar-coating the