

set out in section 4, to enforce those regulations even to the point of confiscating property, seizing goods, or prescribing penalties for disobeying the Pooh-Bahs—I like that word, which I learned last night from the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario (Mr. Macdonnell)—of the vast state bureaucracy that has grown up in Canada during the war years.

The government pleads that these powers are necessary because we face a national emergency. People all over the country are asking, just what is the nature of this emergency? The war against Germany, Italy and Japan is at an end. The men and women of the armed services, after four, five and six years of regimentation, discipline and taking orders, are coming back with high hopes of being able to enjoy the freedom for which they have been fighting. They are finding at home regulated, controlled, inspected and bureaucracy-written industries, agriculture, and business firms, that are attempting to readjust themselves to peace-time conditions. If ever there was a time when the path to progress should be cleared of all unnecessary controls and restrictions, when people should be free and unhampered to tackle the great task of reconstruction which lies before them, when the flood-gates of abundant production should be opened wide, it is now.

Spokesmen for the government will reply that if the controls which exist were to be removed now, chaotic conditions would result. As the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent), has pointed out, prices would rise and greater labour unrest would follow. The short answer to that, of course, is that the government, though warned repeatedly about the dangers ahead, have persisted in remaining within the confines of a debt-creating system of finance by which they have actually created for themselves the very problems which they now seek absolute powers to control.

Under a sound democratic and scientific system of finance, neither inflation nor deflation could threaten our economy. At the same time, I must admit, it is a fact that under our present debt-ridden and restrictive money system, both inflation and deflation, with all their disastrous consequences, do threaten our economy. These dangers cannot be dealt with satisfactorily through controls that place in the hands of individuals great power and authority over their fellow men because, as the war has so definitely proved, when one control is introduced to cure human problems it inevitably creates more and other serious problems. In my judgment, the only effective controls are those which are inherent in a justly scientific economic structure that, by its very fairness and justice, induces the

[Mr. Low.]

full support of all classes of the community and which will be freely sustained without compulsion of any kind.

We are prepared to grant that the government requires temporarily to exercise a measure of control over price structures, foreign exchange, export and import of goods, and so on; but is that any reason why parliament should abrogate its authority and give the cabinet the power to do any act or thing which the cabinet may deem necessary? Apologists for the government will answer, of course, that the government must lay before parliament the orders in council which it does pass. The members of this house must know that means little or nothing. Even Hitler would condescend from time to time to report to the reichstag what he had done by his own special dispensations, and his report was always met by cries of "Heil, heil", for what else could be said on matters over which they had no power whatever?

Yes; orders in council will be laid before parliament; they will be published in the *Canada Gazette*; but that will in no way detract from the powers for which the Prime Minister and his colleagues are now asking in this bill. There are a good many considerations which members should have in mind when voting on bill No. 15. I have not very much time to deal with all of them, and therefore I shall limit myself to just one or two of the most important.

In the first place, during the war the government of this country exercised very wide powers. They created a vast bureaucracy for the purpose of exercising a mass of controls and prohibitions to deal with the emergency which they saw before them. Men were appointed to positions where they wielded great power, and some of them became petty despots. I can assure the house of that. To be perfectly fair about the matter, I think that under all the circumstances, and taking everything in balance, they did in the main a pretty good job of preventing chaotic conditions in our country. But it is an axiom that all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The measure of corruption which does take place in any army of bureaucrats is in direct proportion to the power that they have been wielding; and so, sir, Canadians should now keep their eyes wide open, now that the war is over and we have returned to a condition of peace.

These bureaucrats do not want to lose their jobs. They do not want to lose their power. It is always far easier to build up a bureaucracy than to tear one down after it has become thoroughly established in the country. I warn the government that they will have