

Defence Production Act

officials and employees of the department a sense of permanency as far as their employment is concerned, but would also bring before parliament at an appropriate date and on a mandatory basis a review of the whole question of the powers contained in the act.

The general spirit of the house was different from what it is on this occasion. The Prime Minister, who intervened at that time in the debate, said this as reported at page 2002 of *Hansard*:

The Minister of Trade and Commerce has already stated that the government would give consideration to the views which have been expressed here in that regard.

That is in regard to these compromise solutions. Then as reported at page 2003 the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra summed it up. This will indicate how close we were to agreement on that occasion. He summed it up as follows:

I suggest that the matter be allowed to stand as it is at the present time, on the understanding that the resolution goes through and that the government will give serious consideration to this suggestion.

That gets us past the resolution stage, Mr. Speaker. We have reached the month of June, three months later. A change has taken place. What is the reason for that change? I do not propose to repeat some of the things that have already been quoted from the statements made in 1951 and again this year with regard to the extraordinary powers not being necessary. This morning when the hon. member for Prince Albert was speaking he drew attention to the fact that when special emergency powers were required in 1945, one year was considered to be essential; that in 1951, when the act was first brought in, five years was considered to be essential before review; and that now, in 1955, we have reached the stage of no limit. That represents a considerable change of thinking in a ten-year period.

My good friend the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—and I am not sure that I should draw attention to him again—changed his position during the course of three months, strangely enough, as did the minister. When the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was criticizing my friend the hon. member for Eglinton, and incidentally, accusing him of being somewhat loquacious and long-winded—a criticism which I thought was odd coming as it did from my good friend the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—

Mr. Fleming: Physician, heal thyself.

Mr. Knowles: I merely objected to his talking for so long without telling us where he stood.

[Mr. Churchill.]

Mr. Fleming: It was apparent to everybody but the hon. member.

Mr. Churchill: The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, for whom I have the greatest respect, has told us where he stood because he has changed his position in the period from March to June. Speaking of the hon. member for Eglinton, as reported at page 4536 of *Hansard* he said:

He wants a time limitation in the bill.

So did the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre a few months ago.

He did not state how many years or what length of time. I suggest it is parliament's job not just to say we will turn these powers over and we will review them in two, three, five or ten years. No, it is parliament's job to maintain a constant scrutiny of a department of this kind.

Mr. Knowles: Do you not agree?

Mr. Churchill: I quite agree. I also agree that there should be a limitation, as I intend to point out.

The minister, having somewhat altered his position in the course of three months, I regret to say, repeated the arguments he made in March. He drew our attention to the fact that one of the reasons for the necessity of making the department permanent was in order to hold the members of his department. Then he suggested that at the time the estimates were under consideration we could review the work of his department and suggest changes. That matter has been effectively dealt with by others, so I need not dwell upon it. In reply to the suggestion made by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra that the powers might be limited, he quoted his legal advisers to the effect that it was rather difficult to express that suggestion in an act so it would be satisfactory. Let me point out—and I think I just have time in which to do so—that on March 10, thinking of how this act might be terminated when the time came for it, the Prime Minister as reported at page 1905 of *Hansard* said this: . . . leaving it to parliament to decide if and when it will be proper to bring it to a termination.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that on Wednesday, as reported at page 4542 of *Hansard*, the Minister of Defence Production said this:

I do not propose to be told now by any hon. member just when I will liquidate it.

Hence, Mr. Speaker, you see that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence Production are not in agreement. The Prime Minister suggests that parliament will decide when this act shall be terminated some time in the future, and the Minister of Defence Production says that he will not permit any hon. member to suggest—