

Emergency Powers Act

to private members on the other side of the house than has been displayed at any time during the discussion of the measure now before us. It is this erosion of the powers of parliament which is indicated by the fact that a measure which was brought forward under different circumstances in 1951, and with different arguments, is now put before us with the suggestion that we should concur in the extension of the order, without any resistance, because it has already found its way onto the statute books, and as a result of arguments in its support that have no validity today.

Let us repeat that while the government may regard this as an emergency, the emergency today is not in the nature of the emergency that was before us at the time this matter was under discussion in 1951. At that time the Korean situation was extremely uncertain. At that time there was none of the combined strength that now does give ground for hope that the free world presents a sufficiently united front to defeat aggression.

At that time we did not have the great and powerful organizations which today bring together so effectively the strength of the nations of the western world. True, the situation is serious. True, there is a war, and a terrible war for those who are engaged in it, now taking place in Korea. True, there is a threat in many parts of the world. But the simple fact remains that, with that measure of stabilization which has come about, short of war, invasion, insurrection, or apprehended war, it is not likely that any one of us is going to live through a period which will be any less of an emergency than that through which we are now living.

We know that there is an act on the statute books that can be employed, if invasion, war or insurrection, real or apprehended, should occur. That being so, we believed that the government should now be trying to find ways and means by which we can create long-term plans under this kind of life which we are going to live probably for the rest of our lives, which will preserve the rights, powers and sovereignty of parliament; and, particularly in this country of ours, not only preserve the sovereignty of parliament but protect and continue, in its full balance of authority, that federal system which is the basis of our national unity.

Mr. J. M. Macdonnell (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few, I hope, fairly brief observations and in doing so I would call a few witnesses from outside the chamber.

Sometimes the duty of the opposition is a little frustrating. Often we feel there is a kind of iron curtain dividing this chamber, so that

[Mr. Drew.]

arguments that we feel are convincing seem to get stopped in transit.

Mr. Adamson: An ivory curtain, not iron.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I shall bring witnesses from outside. Sometimes I believe delay is a good thing; and in this instance, owing to the delay, there has been time for public opinion to begin to catch up.

As I said a moment ago, often in the opposition we seem to be frustrated because we do not seem to get the help to which we feel we are entitled from outside the house. I am happy to have here some clippings which will show that apparently there is a widespread feeling throughout the country that this is a bad measure. It would seem that the country is beginning to realize we are not just talking about words, when we oppose emergency powers, but that we are talking about things which can be real and important.

I should like first of all to read a leading editorial, or part of it, from the *Calgary Herald* of February 10, which is headed "The Prime Minister Uses Strange Words", and states:

Last week the House of Commons debated a government motion to extend the emergency powers bill for another year. This bill, in effect, gives the cabinet dictatorial powers, enabling it to—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I do not think it is customary to quote from sources outside the house opinions as to what is taking place in the house. That has never been permitted. It is true that I have allowed reading of a limited number of factual editorial opinions; but I cannot allow a controversy between someone outside the house and someone in the house. I think our rules are clear on that point. Citation 265 in Beauchesne's third edition states:

It is not in order to read articles in newspapers, letters or communications emanating from persons outside the house and referring to, or commenting on, or denying anything said by a member or expressing any opinion reflecting on proceedings within the house.

Also see citation 266.

An hon. member is expected to express his own opinions; but I think he can see the position in which the house would find itself if a debate were to be permitted between someone in the house and someone outside the house.

Mr. Macdonnell (Greenwood): I am surprised, Mr. Speaker, because it seems to me I have heard scores of quotations read by hon. members during the course of debates. Indeed, I myself in the budget debate, I recall clearly, read during the course of my speech twelve or fifteen comments referring to the effect of the budget, and commenting as to the wisdom or the lack of wisdom in what was contained in the budget.