

Unemployment Continuance Act

do with giving the ministry unlimited moneys for the purpose of expenditure in connection with relief, removing from this House of Commons all control over this expenditure and incidental taxation, and allowing the ministry a free hand with reference thereto. The third important feature is that which takes from this parliament what I believe is its exclusive right, namely, that of legislating on matters relating to peace, order and good government, and of giving to the ministry the power to exercise that right in secret session by order in council. The bill must be regarded as three distinct measures, and such opposition as there has been from this side of the house has related exclusively to that provision of the enactment which deprives the House of Commons of its control over taxation and expenditure, and to the provision which gives to the ministry absolute powers to legislate by order in council with respect to peace, order and good government, which means pretty much anything and everything.

There can be no question that at no time in the course of this whole debate has there been opposition on the part of any hon. members on this side to granting to the government what was necessary in the way of moneys for the purpose of relief, and granting those moneys immediately. I made that abundantly clear when I spoke the other evening and said that not only were we prepared to vote what was necessary for two months in the form of supply, or a grant in aid, if the ministry so preferred, but that we were prepared to vote what moneys might be necessary up to March 31, 1933. I went further and stated that if the ministry were wedded to the phraseology or to any other feature of the enactment of the previous year we would be perfectly agreeable to allowing the measure of relief to be voted under a similar enactment, provided that it did not contain the two objectionable features, the one depriving the Commons of its control over taxation and expenditure, and the other giving to the ministry absolute powers in the matter of legislating with respect to peace, order and good government.

The reason I feel it is important to emphasize that question is that apparently even yet, whether intentionally or unintentionally, a certain section of the press of this country does not correctly represent the position of the opposition in this matter. For example, I have in my hand a clipping from the government organ in this city of the night before last, referring to what transpired—

Mr. BENNETT: What paper would that be?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: That is the Ottawa Journal.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Mr. BENNETT: I did not know it by that name.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am referring to the Ottawa Journal of Wednesday last.

Mr. BENNETT: I did not recognize it by that name.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am not attaching importance at the moment to the fact that this is the government organ in Ottawa; I am rather attaching importance to the extent to which a large section of the press appears, up to the present time, to have misunderstood the significance of such action as has been taken by the opposition during the course of this debate. The article is headed:

Liberals Fail In Effort To Kill Relief
Legislation

Opposition Amendment Is Rejected 100 To 64

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I hear some hon. gentlemen opposite say "hear, hear," with regard to the statement that the Liberals failed in an effort to kill the relief legislation. I think I have made it abundantly clear that the Liberals have been prepared from the outset to grant immediately, and to whatever extent might be required, whatever was needed in the way of relief legislation. What the Liberals have failed to kill is the action of the government which deprives the House of Commons of its control over taxation and expenditure incidental to relief; what the Liberals have failed to kill is the autocratic action of the government, by the use of closure, to gain for itself the right to legislate by order in council with respect to peace, order and good government, a right which under our constitution it was never intended that parliament should be called upon to part with in any particular. That is what the Liberal opposition, despite all its efforts, has failed to prevent up to the present time.

Now may I present a point of view to hon. gentlemen opposite, to members of the Conservative party as Conservatives, which I would ask them to consider carefully before this measure is given third reading. It is an aspect which has been very much in the minds of those of us who have taken the stand that has been taken with regard to this measure; it is a point of view I have already presented in general words but which I wish to present now in concrete form. Whatever is done in this house of an important nature, becomes in course of time, a precedent. We are living in troublous times; we are living in an age