

Defence Production Act

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): The subject matter.

Mr. Drew: Yes, the subject matter.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Yes, and that kills the bill.

Mr. Drew: That is the only way the resolution can be drawn—"but that the subject matter thereof be referred to the standing committee on banking and commerce." But that is not the end.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): It can never come back then.

Mr. Drew: There is not an hon. member in the house who does not know that a resolution of that kind instructs the committee, in effect, to report back to the house. And, after all, there is no illusion in anyone's mind about the fact that the government's majority on the committee will follow the government's instructions. We are putting it on that basis, knowing that the majority of government members can bring back such a bill, consistent with the undertaking of leaving the same powers or of revising them as the government advises its own members. We know that. But we protest any proposal for a Department of Defence Production unless it were appropriately defined and consistent with the government's earlier statement that there were some provisions which should not be continued.

That is the result. It is certainly neither the end of this bill, nor is it in any way a vote against the Department of Defence Production, because that is not an issue in the amending bill now before this house.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. C. W. Hodgson (Victoria, Ont.): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate, following the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell), the leader of the C.C.F. party, who accused the Conservative party of things that happened 30 and 35 years ago and unearthed a lot of politicians who have been dead for years, I am reminded of the soldier who knows most about war, the one who was there.

The debate has gone on for a long time. I assure you, sir, and hon. members that I will not take up too much time. I do not think anybody can accuse me of taking up very much of the time of the house at any time, and especially during this session. Nevertheless, this is probably the most important legislation that has come before the House of Commons in many years.

I notice that the *Ottawa Journal* of July 6 calls this debate a filibuster. Well, you may

call it what you like; it matters not. It does not affect the process of parliament one iota. If it is a filibuster I must say, sir, that the Conservative party has shown more energy and initiative in carrying on the filibuster than the Liberal government has in coping with the situation.

I cannot understand why the government will not accept the amendment. It changes the original bill very little. It does put a time limit on the bill, which has been discussed here in the last few minutes.

This bill does more than give the government the power over defence production or munitions. If it did only that I would be in favour of it. The bill gives power to one man in the cabinet; it vests power in one person, the Minister of Defence Production. He has more power than the Prime Minister so far as defence production is concerned. Probably he has quite a lot to say about many things in the Liberal party. The Prime Minister said the Minister of Defence Production drafted the bill and came to him and said, "You present it to the house." It seems to me the instructions were given by the Minister of Defence Production rather than by the Prime Minister.

Many kind things have been said about the Minister of Defence Production, and many of them are true. He did build up a reputation as a good business executive during the last war, especially in the department of munitions and supply. Because of the powers he has possessed over the past 16 years he has grown into the habit of wanting more power; he may be getting power hungry. Probably he wants to set an example for all time in Canada. Probably he wants to show that he has been delegated more power than any member of parliament in Canada has had in the past.

In the past this same minister has made remarks such as "What's a million? Peanuts." Another remark he made in recent years was, "Who will stop us?" If this bill is not designed for "who will stop us?", then I do not understand it. It has taken out "we" and "us" and has replaced them with "I" and "me".

The minister made a statement to the effect that he seemed to be living in another world. Perhaps this is a different world from that in which he has lived in the last 16 years, because in my time here I cannot recall any occasion when the minister did not get his own way in any legislation he brought into the house. He has had his own way in running his own department. With that everybody, I think, the minister himself included, will agree. Statements have