

*Unemployment Continuance Act*

Mr. STEVENS: No one knows better than the right hon. gentleman, and a certain number of those sitting around him who have had experience in administration, the difficulty of administering the affairs of a government, with conditions as they are to-day, under a specific appropriation of parliament.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. STEVENS: My hon. friends may pooh-pooh the idea, but the fact remains. I have already cited a number of cases that could not have been dealt with under any appropriation which might have been made last year. So I say, Mr. Speaker, that in this resolution there is no invasion of the public interest or the public right; on the other hand power is given to safeguard those rights, and I contend that last year, under this bill, the government was not guilty of any departure from regular constitutional procedure.

Mr. VALLANCE: Did I understand the minister to say that it was due to the fact that this bill was being held up that the farmers were not now receiving seed grain? I ask that because a press despatch was drawn to my attention yesterday stating that on and after to-day the farmers will receive that seed grain.

Mr. STEVENS: I think the answer to that question is very simple. Seed grain relief is being directed by the provinces. Should this bill not pass and should the government not be clothed with the powers sought, the provinces will have to bear the burden alone, without the assistance of this government.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: No; the government can bring in a proper supply bill.

Mr. DONNELLY: Does the minister say the seed has not been bought?

Mr. STEVENS: The seed is being purchased by the provincial authorities.

Mr. G. W. McPHEE (Yorkton): Mr. Speaker, the more I consider the resolution which is the subject matter of this debate the more I am impressed with the great travesty on responsible government which it contemplates. My hon. friend (Mr. Stevens) to whom I have listened with a great deal of pleasure for the last half hour, has not helped me very much; he has simply stated that the government is carrying into effect, as he said, the autocratic powers which it has been able to exercise because last year we passed the unemployment relief act. That bill is now dead; the resolution now before the house seeks to breathe life into that dead body, and so the whole question is opened up again.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

A hundred years ago, Mr. Speaker, those who laid the foundations of this great country had to fight against the old Tory Family Compact of that day, and after eventual bloodshed they secured for themselves and those who were to follow responsible government for Canada. No matter how distasteful it may be to hon. gentlemen opposite, it is a source of pride to us of the Liberal faith that on this side of the house we have two grandsons of the old rebels, Mackenzie and Papi-neau, in the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) and the hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa).

The rights so dearly bought for us should not be lightly given up. In those days the Family Compact, in their efforts to keep for themselves the power they then possessed, used methods somewhat akin to those adopted by the present government. For instance, every student of history knows that in Halifax they took the printing press belonging to one of the Reformers and dumped it into Halifax harbour, and they took the printing press of another Reformer in central Canada and threw it into lake Ontario. If that were done in these days I presume it would be said it was done for the peace, order and good government of Canada. But, Mr. Speaker, the actions of the old Tory Family Compact pale into insignificance when we consider the actions of the present government, autocratically demanding the rights that should be exercised only by the elected representatives of the people. This is the fundamental issue as far as I am concerned, and I submit that every hon. member of this house stands upon an equal footing. Each one of us has the right to say whether or not money shall be voted for this or for that and how it shall be spent. Let the right hon. gentleman follow the advice given to him by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King) and bring in a money bill for whatever amount is necessary. If that is done we on this side will guarantee that in half an hour the money will be voted in the way in which it should be voted by a representative parliament.

The whole question of unemployment and farm relief now is opened up. Let us consider what it all means. At the best this measure cannot be even a palliative because it leaves the victim in a worse condition than he was before. Hon. gentlemen opposite say that they have not received any constructive criticism from this side of the house, but I offer one bit of constructive criticism—let this government get off the backs of the agriculturists of Canada. That would do more to relieve unemployment than anything else.