

*Defence Production Act*

happened with regard to private property, which was dealt with in great particularity. I recall an instance in which a farmer up in northern Ontario was unable, without authority from Ottawa, to kill a pig he had on his farm for his own use. That authority was required under control orders of that time dealing with the use of livestock. We all remember that if a suit of clothes was to be made, the federal government prescribed how many pockets it should have and whether or not there would be a cuff on the trousers. We had the most minute control and regulation of affairs centralized in Ottawa.

It was naturally the desire of all Canadians to enjoy, in their personal affairs and in their property affairs, as much personal freedom as was consistent with the public interest and to be relieved of that great mass of regulations and controls. It was the desire of the municipalities and of the provinces to be restored to their normal authority under the constitution. Hence, when the fighting ceased, pressure was brought to bear to remove these extraordinary and emergency powers; and they have been removed, bit by bit. I suggest that we have before us today the last of the emergency powers of substantial proportions. As the minister has said, the emergency powers act itself was liquidated two years ago. In those circumstances I suggest that the government is under the onus of making a strong case before it asks parliament to continue these emergency powers. As I have said, this is the last of the emergency powers. These powers are due to expire on July 31 of next year. If they are to be continued, we should have some justification for their continuance. We are not asked to continue them for another period, even; we are asked to continue these powers indefinitely. It is therefore a perpetuation of what began in an emergency and should be limited to an emergency.

The question is whether there is today an emergency of such a nature as justifies the continuance of the powers for a period of time. There may be justification for a temporary continuance of these powers but the case has not been put to us in that way. We are asked to give a perpetual life to these emergency powers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the principal objection and one of the main reasons why the government is under an onus to make a very clear case is that these powers interfere very deeply with the normal freedom of a citizen to deal with his property. The minister has indicated, rightly I believe, that there is no attempt to deal with Canadian citizens directly. In other words, there is no power to imprison or to order the person directly,

but there are a great many indirect powers which affect personal rights, mainly the personal rights of property which have been enjoyed and which are the bulwark of this Canadian society. In my opinion you cannot continue to have a free society unless the people have economic independence and freedom which is not in any way dependent on the government. We have had, and we have submitted to, a condition of economic dependence for these few years which, if it were continued, would soon lead directly into some form of state socialism or state authority of a kind which is not consistent with free enterprise such as this country has enjoyed and should continue to enjoy in the future.

There are really very important issues involved, although they perhaps do not appear on the surface. It has been pointed out that this kind of control does commend itself to those who give a greater role to the state in peacetime, the socialists, who would organize affairs more completely through the state and who are prepared to nationalize a good part of industry. They do not seem to be concerned when authority of this kind is given to the state. This is because their political theories and views run in that direction. My whole belief is of a contrary nature. I believe that economic independence is essential to any kind of personal freedom in any democratic country. If everyone is dependent on the state there can be no survival of individual liberty.

What is the justification that has been put forward by the minister for these powers? I think it is stated perhaps as concisely as anywhere at page 4512 of *Hansard* for June 2, 1955.

**Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):** Is the hon. member talking about the economic independence of the unemployed?

**Mr. Michener:** I shall deal with my friend's interjection in due course, but I prefer not to be interrupted at this stage. The minister says this:

I can tell this house that generally speaking a government order does not receive the same attention as a privately placed order.

In my opinion this is a most astonishing assertion, and one that in my experience I have never found to be true.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** How much experience have you had?

**Mr. Michener:** I have had quite a bit. I have lived my whole lifetime in this country, and I do not think the minister can make the same assertion.

The reason is that generally speaking the government cannot put on as much pressure as does the private buyer. That has been my experience,