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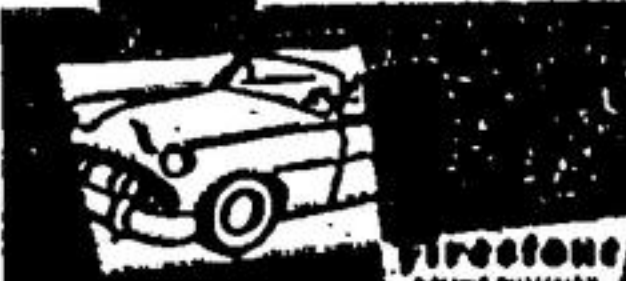
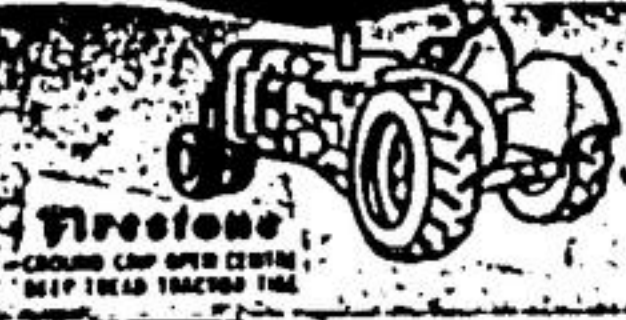
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## Halton M.P. Joins in Conservative Filibuster

Sybil Bennett, Q.C. M.P., joined in a Progressive-Conservative 'filibuster' aimed at abolishing extension of the Defence Production Act when she spoke in the House of Commons at some length on June 28th.

The Conservatives are putting up a strong fight to end sweeping authorities granted the cabinet and Defence Production Minister C. D. Howe under the act, with Opposition Leader George Drew in charge of the campaign.

Monday they won their point and the filibuster ended when the government limited power of the act to a three-year period.

For the benefit of her constituents here, Miss Bennett's remarks are quoted in full from Hansard.

Mr. Speaker, the minister will have to wait a few minutes yet. I have listened to this debate. I know a great deal has been said. A great deal has been said in reiteration, but, Mr. Speaker, the reason I want to join in this debate is that the issue before us, the very principle of this bill, goes to the very heart, to the very root, to the very being of our constitution and of our free parliamentary system. I want to say this to you, Mr. Speaker. Every man and woman elected to this house under our free parliamentary system should be speaking, should be raising their voices and should have something to say in the defence of our constitution and of our parliamentary system which we have had for long years, in fact for centuries. It was only about 300 or 400 years ago, which is a very short time actually in our history, that our forefathers stood in the mother of parliaments and fought this particular issue, the very principles that we are considering in this bill today. Therefore I say, Mr. Speaker, that every hon. member elected by the free will and the free vote of the people of this nation should be speaking to uphold and to extend the bulwarks of the free and magnificent institutions that we have enjoyed for centuries.

It is not a matter of the minister, nor is it a matter so much of this bill and other bills. This bill is similar to other bills. Every bill that comes before this house does to a certain extent give wide powers. This particular bill however gives the minister in charge the widest power possible, the widest powers to go into every phase and every department of the economic and social life of this country.

In addition to giving these very wide powers, Mr. Speaker, there is no limitation upon the time during which the minister has these powers and by other hon. members that it is very necessary to protect the country, it is very necessary to protect this nation because we live in a state of emergency, we live in a state of upheaval, we live in a state of uncertainty, and naturally we must be able to move quickly and with dexterity. Naturally, we must be able to pass laws to manage the country, to bring forth its greatest manpower and obtain their great services.

In the first place, Mr. Speaker, we are not in an emergency. Any suggestion that we are in an emergency today is foolish and ludicrous. We know we are living in serious times, and we shall continue in that way, but actually serious times have almost become normal. Furthermore, we have passed through two great wars, the first world war, the second world war and the Korean war. I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, and the house that at that time we were able to rally together, we were able to bring all our forces together, and we fought those wars to a proper, a complete and a victorious conclusion. We are not in a different situation today. I will go farther than that and say that I am not so sure emergency powers of this kind should be granted even for a limited time, because we live in a day and age when transportation is speedy. Parliament can be called together from every part of this nation. As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, in the last three days I have covered 3,800 miles in this country.

Considering that, it is abundantly evident that in a very short time, if an emergency arose, we could be brought together, we could consider these matters. Never once in our history, not during the first war, the second war or the Korean war did this parliament, the representatives of the people, refuse to vote anything that was required for defence or the necessities or emergency of this nation. Therefore I am not so sure that these emergency rights should be given under our constitution, under our freedom, under our rights, under the very reasons why we are sent down here. And why do the people of the country send us here? They send us here and they pay us a salary to be here, to consider these things, to go into these matters and, if it is necessary, to give these very wide powers where they are required and where they can be properly handled and properly contained.

I want to tell you that the very great danger in this thing is that there is a new philosophy abroad in this country. As a matter of fact, there is a philosophy abroad in the world in which many countries have fallen prey.

It has come about in a very subtle way and in a way that on hardly thinks about. If you look at the totalitarian states under dictatorships, how did the powers first come to those dictators? How did they come in Italy? How did they come in Germany? How did they come in Russia? How did they come in other parts of the world? The answer is that

by the slow means of giving powers, by slowly giving extraordinary powers to one man, to a group of men or to a coterie of men. We are living in a day and age where one man or a group of men or a coterie of men what power. They want it so that they may be able to handle things, as someone said to me, in a much more streamlined and speedier way. I want to tell you that that is the very beginning, that is the very basis, that is the very essence, that is the very start of this taking over of power. It may be very subtle, it may be very hidden, but actually it is laying the foundation and preparing the way to much greater and broader powers to be given to one man or to a group and it finally ends in a dictatorship.

It is not a case of the minister in question. It is not a case so much of the principle of this bill. It is not only just this bill; we know that there will be something else. Larger and broader and wider powers will be asked for. As I say, it is a very dangerous philosophy that is growing in the world and is taking root subtly but surely and gradually, and very definitely it is taking root in this country and in this parliament of Canada.

I remember a very prominent person in this country, a man of ability, a man of good quality thinking, once saying to me that the day and age of parliamentary debate and parliamentary argument had come to an end, that we could not have it because we have not the time. It was argued that we have too much work to do in this country, that we have too much business to do in this country, that we must streamline our business and give it over to a few experts. It is argued that there is no need for this discussion and this debate on this bill.

I want to say to you as do all members of this house that after all this is not what we have lived and fought for, this is not what our ancestors fought for for hundreds of years. We are advocating the retaining of those very principles. Call it a filibuster if you like; I am glad to be in a filibuster if its purpose is to guard those principles of democracy and our democratic institutions. Those are what we want to uphold in the years to come.

When I look across at the minister I cannot help remembering that on a many occasions he has been more than good to me. I regard him most highly; I have the highest respect for him. But my sense of constitutional right, my sense of parliamentary freedom must always override any personal feelings that I may have.

I think that the minister himself, and surely hon. members sitting opposite when looking over this bill, must realize that in giving themselves these very wide powers they are taking on a tremendous responsibility, so great that I would hardly think any one minister or any one group would want to take it on. These powers are very wide. As a matter of fact, if this bill passes and these powers are granted for an indefinite period certain phases of our parliamentary government will have passed away, will be gone entirely.

The minister could go out and take over any business in this country that he wished to take over. He could take over the railroads, he could take over the hydroelectric power facilities, he could take over any private industry. He could take over the press, and I should think they would be greatly alarmed about that because after all they have been the great proponents of freedom in this nation. We welcome that, and that is what it should always be. But these things can be done. In addition to that he can order any person that he should choose, not he himself with his particular and peculiar ability but anyone he chooses to go into any industry to manage that industry. But the great part must be responsible to the former owner of it all is that person will not and will not be responsible actually to anyone. Certainly he would not be responsible to the people or to their elected representatives.

To my mind that sets a very bad example. It sets a very bad example to Canadian business and to Canadian institutions in the method of carrying on our institutions. I suppose it will be said that recourse could be taken to the courts in an action against the crown, but every hon. member here, particularly those who adhere to the law profession, know how foolish and how impossible it is to take action against the crown. You do not get very far in any action against the crown.

Then I say with the greatest deference that the minister and the whole government would be laid open to pressure from different groups. After all we are only human beings and this pressure possibility is one of the dangerous aspects of this bill. Somebody might want more steel or something else and he would come to the controller or the person in control to get his steel. Then of course he would feel he must make a large return at certain times. Human nature being what it is, that is the sort of thing which makes our parliamentary practices corrupt and improper. We are here in this democratic country today with our democratic institutions and we should be able to show the world that we are able to carry on, that we are able to move through free enterprise, through the freedom of man, to think and to do and to give of our very best.

I want to take issue at this moment with those to the left of me. It is improper and unfair to make any suggestions that in the Korean war or in the first and second great wars any part of this country was controlled by

any groups of persons. That is not true. We know the leaders of industry and men working in industry, from the very top to the very bottom, gave the very best of everything they had to the winning of this war, and supported the men and women who went out and fought on the fronts for us, who fought for that particular freedom for which I am speaking in this house today.

I should like to say to you, Mr. Speaker, and to every hon. member of this house, and to the people of Canada, that I do not intend to go home to my constituency and tell the people, some 55,000 people, that I for one moment allowed myself to give in in any way, to procrastinate or to have any doubts as to where I stand, because I stand for the free parliamentary institutions of this nation. They have been with us for hundreds of years and it is my pride that I could play some part in maintaining it. I intend to vote for them to be with us for many more sessions. For that reason I cannot and will not be found supporting a bill of this kind.

Civic Holiday, Monday, August 1.

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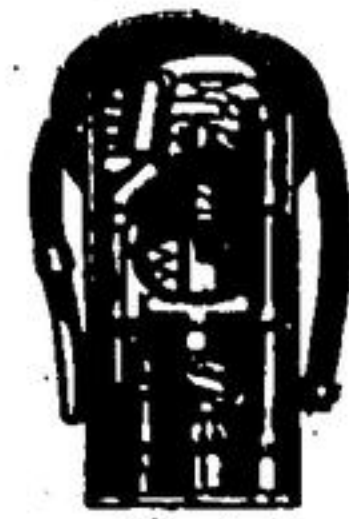


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