

should be given immediate attention. I table a copy of this letter. These matters include:

Examination of the various agencies concerned in planning and initiating procurement and production of war equipment in Canada so as to recommend a division of responsibilities which will ensure that these responsibilities are effectively met without overlapping.

Consideration of requirements in the light of plans and possible programs of the armed forces and the assessment of the capacity to make available the materials, manpower and manufacturing facilities that may be required, with special recommendations regarding materials, industry or plants which are regarded as essential and for which some special provision should be made.

To assist in the work of organization, I have designated Colonel W. G. Denny, O.B.E., as acting executive secretary. Colonel Denny has held positions in connection with ordnance work during the war in Europe, as well as at home and in the United States.

It will be seen that one of the major jobs of the board will be to ensure effective co-operation between the armed forces and the various agencies operating in this field. I refer particularly to the newly organized Canadian Ordnance Association, representing industry.

In the last war Canada became a great arsenal of democracy. Should an emergency ever arise again our expectation is that this board will assist us in being prepared to ensure that Canada will play its full and necessary part in the preservation of freedom and in the defence of our country.

MINISTERIAL POWERS

REFERENCE TO DECISION OF MR. JUSTICE ANGERS IN NARCOTICS CASE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. DIEFENBAKER (Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton), and offer it also for the edification of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Ilsley), in regard to a judgment handed down by Mr. Justice Angers. I would ask the Minister of National Defence whether, in view of the finding of the judge in this case that discretionary encroachment by certain ministers and deputy ministers will, if not curtailed, result in this country's being ruled by a dictatorial government, he will alter the order he made.

Hon. BROOKE CLAXTON (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member did not give me notice of the question, and it is three years since I had anything to do with the case to which he has referred. I have a fairly clear recollection of it, however, and on the basis of that recollection

[Mr. Claxton.]

I should like to answer the hon. member's question and set him right about some of the assumptions he apparently has as the basis of his question.

Mr. DIEFENBAKER: I quoted from the judgment.

Mr. CLAXTON: This case concerns a veteran, Paul Belleau, who suffered a disability resulting from tuberculosis contracted at the end of the first great war. As a veteran he received treatment from the department of pensions and national health for a long period. I think he first came before the narcotics division of that department some time in the nineteen twenties, and some time in the nineteen thirties it was found that he was receiving, through prescriptions from his own physicians, thirty grains of morphine per day which I am advised made him the largest known single user of the 4,000 known addicts in Canada at that time.

The narcotics division of the department of pensions and national health was headed by Colonel Sharman, a man having a widely known reputation throughout the world for having made a great contribution in that field. Being entrusted by the then Minister of Pensions and National Health with the responsibility of the administration of the narcotics act he caused inquiries to be made to see why this huge quantity of morphine was being prescribed for this man. In consequence, over a long period of time, I think stretching up to fifteen years, there were discussions between this man and his doctors and those representing the department as to what could be done. As I say, there is no case of any doctor being allowed to prescribe such a dosage for an addict, at least so far as my information goes.

The officers of the department co-operated with this man's own doctors in working out a plan for his treatment and cure by a reduction of the dosage. On a number of occasions the doctors of the department, or those appointed to represent the department, saw the man's own doctors to work out the details. However, it was found on repeated occasions that the man would not co-operate, and still his doctor and those representing him wanted to obtain these huge doses.

In these circumstances and in consequence of events which took place long before I came into the Department of National Health and Welfare, but for which I am glad to assume responsibility, it was decided on the advice of no less than six or seven doctors, most of whom I saw myself, and after I had examined the record repeatedly, that the requests made by this man through his own physician shall