

*Supply—Defence Production*

of general production it calls for as high a measure of skill as could ever be required.

Since men from the maritimes and western Canada were able suddenly to adapt themselves to this type of work in plants in central Canada, we are faced with conclusive evidence that if plants were located in the maritimes and the west they would be able to develop the same type of skill with the same speed as was shown previously.

The minister has referred to the efforts that are being made to obtain general co-operation from those who will be responsible for our production. He has indicated, and I have expressed my own hope that all members will agree, that there will be no doubt about the wholehearted co-operation of all Canadians in any steps that are made necessary by the emergency which we face. There can be no doubt that Canadians will accept any challenge that may arise, so long as that challenge is presented to them in clear and understandable terms which will indicate the necessity for whatever they are called upon to do.

I intend later to join in some of the questions which will be asked about the different aspects of defence production, but I wish now to deal with a subject which I believe is of major and compelling importance; and it relates to the announcement just made by the Minister of Defence Production. The minister has spoken of our skill, existing and potential. He has spoken of our tremendous industrial capacity, existing and potential. Our skill and the skill of other industrial nations throughout the free world is going to depend, not only upon our ability to produce and the plans that are made for production, but also very largely upon how far we achieve real co-operation between those nations in the types of production which they carry out.

Shortly after the end of world war II many of us had high hopes that the lessons of that war in regard to the importance of the standardization of equipment, particularly of the calibre of weapons, would be accepted, and that we would not again have the confusion and waste, or even worse, which can result, and in many cases which did result, from non-standardization among armed forces which were working in closest co-operation with each other. Many statements were made which caused the people of the free world to believe that decisions had been made to go ahead with effective standardization. Sometimes the importance of the standardization of the calibre of weapons, even more than of the types of weapons, is

hardly recognized in the general discussion of this subject of international co-operation.

Important as it is from this point of view that standardized weapons be used by armed forces which are called upon to work together in the very closest co-operation, there are other considerations which are even more important. In the first place, if we have different types of weapons and different calibres of weapons employing different types of ammunition, obviously the men who will be called upon to stand side by side in the defence of freedom will require different books of instructions to tell them how to carry out the duties they are to perform in such close physical association. But there is something infinitely more important than that. If we have different types of weapons that in itself creates supply problems, creates difficulties in instruction, and in the end possibly difficulties in drill itself. If we have similar calibres of rifles, machine guns, mortars, rocket launching weapons, guns for aircraft, guns for ships, artillery pieces, and so on, we shall be able to have standardized production of ammunition.

This is tremendously important, because in the end it is the ammunition that does the job. The weapon is merely a device by which the ammunition is projected to the points to which the whole military plan calls for its application. Each weapon, whether it be rifle, machine gun, mortar, rocket launcher or artillery piece, is like a huge tap through which, once it is put into active operation, a flow of ammunition continues to flow in enormous quantities. The moment we accept the proposition that we are not going to have similar types of weapons, we accept also the fact that we must have different types of ammunition, with resulting supply problems in handling the ammunition requirements of the forces that are working together in a common cause.

I raise this question today because of a discussion which took place yesterday in the House of Commons in Great Britain. It was indicated definitely by the British Minister of Defence that their government has made a decision to proceed with the manufacture of rifles and small arms of a different calibre from that which the United States is to produce. The Minister of Defence Production has indicated this morning that it is the intention of the Canadian government to proceed with the production of small arms and other weapons of the same calibre, and I assume of the same type in most cases, as are being used by the United States armed forces.

I am not questioning the necessity for such a decision. The main thing is there must