

Then, on November 24, two days afterwards, the present Minister of Munitions and Supply was named to head the board of war supplies. It was at first the Minister of Finance who had taken upon himself the very great responsibility of having the national defence purchasing board placed under his own direction. What happened? This was a little more than six months before the death of Mr. Rogers, who was then Minister of National Defence. At that time the present Minister of National Defence was Minister of Finance. The war had just started. He had under his jurisdiction that white elephant known as the national defence purchasing board.

In its article of November 24, 1939, the *Montreal Gazette* said: "Howe is named to head board of war supply", and carried the subheading "Move leaves Ralston free for finance duties." That is right; the Minister of Finance could not handle it any more, because the war had started. This proves clearly, beyond doubt, that the attitude of the member for Témiscouata when the national defence purchasing board was instituted was sound and right. Then, supervision over all those purchases was given by the Department of Finance to the Minister of Munitions and Supply, who was then holding the portfolio of Minister of Transport. Finally—

Mr. SPEAKER: If the hon. member will permit me, I understand there is likely to be a blackout in Ottawa this evening. Just when it will be I do not know, but it may be during the course of this sitting. I suggest that when the blackout occurs the house should suspend its sitting, because all lights in the building will be turned out. Hon. members may do as they think best, either remain here or go to their rooms.

Mr. POULIOT: I will try to throw some light on the subject. The Minister of Finance could not handle the job. What had been forecast by his predecessor, Mr. Dunning, proved to be wrong. The system would not work in war time. Therefore, it was transferred to the present minister of munitions at the time when he was Minister of Transport. When it was found that he could not handle both the supply board and the Department of Transport, another minister took charge of the Department of Transport, and he himself became the head of the Department of Munitions and Supply.

I cannot understand the present relations between the Department of Munitions and Supply and the Department of National

Defence. I understand that the munitions department is really the storeroom for everything needed by the three branches of the service. I have no objection to that, but I understand also that the financial powers of the Department of National Defence were first transferred to the Department of Finance and then were given away by the Department of Finance to another department, the munitions department. How is it that the Department of National Defence has a financial adviser? He is Mr. Magee, president of Barclay's bank, a former co-director of the present minister. I mentioned Mr. Magee on February 21, 1941, but I also mentioned another gentleman. Mr. Henry Borden, a nephew of Sir Robert Borden, former leader of the Conservative party, was also a co-director of the present Minister of National Defence before the war. This gentleman has been climbing all the time, and he is now coordinator of controls and chairman of the wartime industries control board in the Department of Munitions and Supply.

It will be seen how this association of vested money interests holds the trumps. The three ministers of national defence gave out a statement at the beginning of the war to the effect that there would be no patronage in their departments. When I mentioned the fact that the Minister of National Defence had brought his old chums from Barclay's bank to his department, he protested and said that Mr. Magee was a good Canadian citizen.

Mr. SLAGHT: I did not catch whether Your Honour said that there would be an adjournment for half an hour, after which we would return, or whether we were adjourning for the evening.

Mr. POULIOT: I can tell my hon. friend that it is immaterial.

Mr. SPEAKER: The house was to be suspended during the blackout but was to resume when the lights come on again.

Mr. HOWE: If I may interject, the fates seem to be against us on this bill. It has been put off from time to time and to-night we seem to be working under difficulties. I would suggest that the debate be adjourned.

Mr. POULIOT: I move that the debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to and debate adjourned.

On motion of Mr. Howe the house adjourned at 8.55 p.m.