

*Defence Production Act*

believe that private enterprise should be given the first right over the interests of this country—

**An hon. Member:** No one said that.

**Mr. Coldwell:**—I do not deny them the right to express that opinion. On the other hand I do not deny the right of the government to come before this house and demand powers that are essential in the public interest. But I do say to the government and to the official opposition that I think the time has come when we should conclude this debate on a conciliatory understanding, that understanding being that while we all—and I say "all" advisedly, because hon. members of the opposition have said it over and over again—are in support of the bill, that is the principle of having a department of defence production, the only thing that separates us is whether it should be permanent or whether its powers should come before the House of Commons for review in three or five years.

If the government would give an indication to the house that if we accept the principle of the bill—which we should do—when we get into committee it will be prepared to consider placing in the bill a limitation of three or five years so it would come back to the House of Commons for review, then this debate could end and we could get down to the other pressing business before the house which we have not yet attempted to consider.

**Right Hon. C. D. Howe (Minister of Defence Production):** Mr. Speaker, the leader of the C.C.F. party has asked me to make a statement. I can do so only with the indulgence of the house, because I have already spoken in this debate. But if the house will permit me to proceed for two minutes I believe I can complete what I have to say.

**Mr. Speaker:** Has the minister unanimous consent to proceed?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of the legislation before the house is primarily to make the Department of Defence Production a permanent department. The bill that is before the house is one that makes permanent the Department of Defence Production, with its powers and its authority. The motion before the house at the moment is that the bill making the Department of Defence Production permanent be not now read a second time. Obviously, if the government must sit here until the snow flies, it must not permit that amendment to pass.

However, the statement by the Prime Minister—and I think he has made two statements—certainly indicates that the government is not rigid about every clause and

[Mr. Coldwell.]

condition in the bill; and at the proper time, which is when the bill is in committee, the government is willing to consider any reasonable proposal. But it cannot consider a proposal of a limitation that would not permit the creation of a permanent department.

Possibly for any particular section of the bill about which hon. gentlemen opposite feel strongly we may be able to consider a time limit, but we cannot consider a time limit for the Defence Production Act as a whole and also attain our objective of a permanent department.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I would point out that the bill before the house is not a bill to set up the department—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, I am just—

**Mr. Speaker:** The Leader of the Opposition has risen on a point of order which it is not. What I propose to do is what I did when the Minister of Defence Production rose, namely ask the house if unanimous consent is given, just so as to regularize the proceedings. Has the Leader of the Opposition unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** Yes.

**Mr. Drew:** It is important, and we are anxious that this be discussed on the basis of the facts. The bill before the house is not a bill setting up the Department of Defence Production. The bill before the house is one which strikes out of the act setting up the Department of Defence Production the section which terminates that act on July 31, 1956.

Furthermore, in relation to what was said by the Minister of Defence Production, the motion before the house is not that the bill setting up the Department of Defence Production shall not be read. It is on the contrary a motion that the committee be instructed to so draft the bill that the Department of Defence Production will be permanent. It is important, in view of what has been said by the minister, to understand that it is the committee that is being instructed to draft such powers as are appropriate.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Would my hon. friend tell me the first ten words of the motion? He knows that the first ten words are that the bill be not now read a second time.

**Mr. Drew:** That Bill No. 256 be not now read, but that it be referred to the committee on banking and commerce.