

Government Orders

An arrangement with Spain is under consideration at the present time. Cabinet could only include those countries on the Automatic Firearms Country Control List through an Order in Council should they qualify under the stringent controls that I have already pointed out.

This bill is of vital concern to the Canadian defence industry in general and, at this time, to the plant in my riding called Diemaco in particular.

In 1976, Diemaco was established by DND policy as the centre of excellence for the provision of small arms to the Canadian Armed Forces so Canada would not be totally dependent on foreign suppliers in times of emergency. This facility is unique in Canada and is fundamental in allowing the Department of National Defence to maintain its operational readiness.

Diemaco was awarded a contract to produce a new family of small arms for the Canadian Armed Forces back in the mid-1970s, resulting in 300 jobs at Diemaco and 200 jobs at its Canadian subcontractors, plus an equal number of jobs with other associated firms.

The end of this production for the Canadian Armed Forces is, however, approaching and this important industrial preparedness capability provided by Diemaco and its approximately 75 subcontractors stands to be lost now to Canada.

It must be stressed that these are high quality, technology-oriented jobs. The investment by the Canadian government of some \$40 million in technology and computer-based manufacturing capability had made and will continue to make a significant contribution to Canada's competitiveness. The capabilities supported include product design engineering, manufacturing engineering, metal finishing, plastic moulding, precision casting forging, and machining and extrusion techniques.

Over the past few years Diemaco has been competing for a contract to provide the Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands with a family of small arms valued at more than \$120 million, potentially followed by a further \$100 million worth of spare parts and other support. Securing this contract will mean an initial 7,680 person-years of Canadian employment, with the potential of almost doubling the employment over the life of the project. Success will also ensure the ability to continue the development work necessary for new weapons systems

for the Canadian Armed Forces into the next century. The Dutch have now begun a new testing phase with DND, supplied with rifles from Diemaco. Without this legislation in place the credibility of this proposal will obviously suffer.

The United States Department of Defence will be looking to Diemaco and its subcontractors for components to maintain its inventory of rifles and machine guns. This could involve 20 Canadian companies and export sales of \$5 million.

Let me wrap up. We are correcting an oversight in the gun control legislation of 1978 for civilians, not armed forces. That is number one.

Number two. What we are doing is keeping a Canadian centre of excellence which the people of Canada, through the Government of Canada, have asked a firm to provide. Go out and hire the people. Go out and do the research. Together we will build this centre so that you can make the weapons for our Canadian Armed Forces.

We have a limited need. If we want that expertise to exist in Canada—I think we do—and if we want those kind of people to develop that expertise into the future, then they have to be able to export, at least to our friends and our allies.

That is all we are asking in this legislation. We are talking about basic military equipment for law enforcement and simple defence needs. These are not weapons of mass destruction. These weapons, such as the fully automatic weapon made in Kitchener, or the light armoured vehicle from GM in London, are for law enforcement and simple military defence needs.

This will be regulated with the the stringent controls I have outlined. With those stringent controls, this is a responsible piece of legislation correcting an oversight of the past.

• (1200)

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, let us just examine those stringent controls a little more carefully. The member has waxed eloquent about stringent controls. The English language gets completely twisted on its head. It reminds one of George Orwell.

This bill sets out in section 2 the following new section 4.1.