

*Supply—Defence Production*

should have standardization. The leader of the opposition spoke about this subject at considerable length. He should know something about the background of it. I can remember reading his articles in *Maclean's* magazine back in 1925 or 1926, I believe it was, on the "weapons of death" and the profits made out of armaments at that time. It seems to me we have not gone very far since. I would say that today in Canada and in the United States and the other Atlantic pact countries 90 per cent of our equipment for war is manufactured by private industry. Is that why we cannot standardize that equipment? Is it because private interests have vested rights in some of these things? I cannot see any other reason for it, because from the military standpoint common sense says that we should have standardization.

If private enterprise is the reason for it, then it is time that some of the private members in democratic parliaments got up and said so; and it is time some of the ministers in the governments of these countries got up and said so. It is too serious a matter for us just to sit back and let things drift.

I had hoped the minister would be able to give us more information than he has given in the matter—because it is a serious one. Those of us in parliament representing the people of Canada should have all possible information on the subject. I would urge upon the minister that Canada, if at all possible, should do more in this matter. I feel sure the government has done a good deal, because we are in between the two millstones. Canada is going to suffer from this lack of standardization. Our army is not large enough to warrant the setting up of plants to produce for it alone. If we have plants that are going to be operated economically we must have contracts from other countries. I repeat that we are the ones who are going to suffer. The government and this parliament should have more to say on this matter.

**Mr. Howe:** As far as Canada is concerned there is no vested interest in any munitions of war that I know of. I doubt if the vested interest in any particular weapon has much to do with the present situation. The rifle has been the most irritating item and this is due wholly to the fact that the technical experts of the three countries concerned, the United States, Great Britain and Canada, cannot agree on what is the best weapon. Opinions differ. I think there are overriding considerations of logistics and supply lines that outweigh the question of which is the best weapon. I dare say that any rifle that any of the three countries is using is a good rifle.

[Mr. Wright.]

It seems to me to be a pity that standardization of weapons cannot be arrived at. We are still taking a leading part in keeping the agitation alive to get the three countries to agree to a standardization of weapons. Not long ago an appeal was sent to General Eisenhower to take the situation in hand as the supreme commander and appoint a committee to arrive at a decision. In the meantime we are not making small arms simply because we do not want to make one that might not be standard by the time we have it in production. About fourteen weapons have been agreed upon for standardization by the three countries, which indicates some progress. But the progress should have been much more rapid and we intend to do anything we can do in the direction of accelerating the trend toward the use of common weapons.

**Mr. Blackmore:** I wonder if the minister could give us some details of the measures which have been adopted to increase the production of steel in Canada? I feel that all through the program which he has been outlining there are three or four advantageous and desirable trends. Obviously the minister is endeavouring to make Canada much more self-sufficient and to that end we find the establishment of plants to produce machine tools and that kind of thing. That is why I wonder why with all the iron ore we have in Canada we have not yet become self-sufficient in steel.

**Mr. Howe:** Every steel plant in the country has a substantial expansion program under way at the moment. The Steel Company of Canada, our largest producer, is adding nearly 50 per cent to its basic steel capacity and is spending around \$50 million for that purpose. Algoma Steel are putting in new finishing capacity and new primary capacity with a program running to about \$35 million. Dominion Foundries at Hamilton are installing a new blast furnace which will probably be in operation before the end of the calendar year. Dominion Steel are also adding to their capacity but I cannot give the details as there has been some delay in working out the complete program.

The full program of expansion will add about one million tons of steel to the Canadian production, or about a 30 per cent increase. It will increase the diversity of the types of finished products that Canada can manufacture. The whole program is being carried out by private interests with money raised in the ways open to private interests. It is an expansion that is greatly in the national interest and the government has been encouraging it in every way possible.