

*Supply—Defence Production*

**Mr. Wright:** These figures are a matter of record in the public accounts which have been tabled in this house.

**Mr. Thatcher:** I think I am in order in quoting these figures. As I say, they are for the past fiscal year. I shall give the figures in thousands only.

**The Chairman:** In that case the hon. member would be in order.

**Mr. Howe:** To what year is my hon. friend referring?

**Mr. Thatcher:** It would be 1949-50.

**Mr. Howe:** We are told that these figures were quoted in the public accounts. Can the hon. member give me the page in the public accounts?

**Mr. Thatcher:** I am sorry I cannot do that because they were only presented at the last meeting and the minutes have not been printed. They are Mr. Low's figures and I am sure the parliamentary assistant has them.

**Mr. Howe:** The chairman has ruled out of order reference to figures given in the public accounts committee, which committee has not reported to the house as yet. The hon. member for Melfort stated that the figures were contained in the public accounts; which is correct?

**Mr. Thatcher:** I do not blame the minister for being ashamed of them, but these are the defence contracts by provinces, which were allocated during 1949-50 in round figures:

Newfoundland .....	\$ 471,000
Prince Edward Island .....	1,491,000
Nova Scotia .....	7,334,000
New Brunswick .....	2,097,000
Quebec .....	81,055,000
Ontario .....	89,401,000
Manitoba .....	9,600,000
Alberta .....	9,576,000
British Columbia .....	8,356,000
Yukon .....	3,409,000
Saskatchewan .....	769,000
United States .....	3,672,000
Britain .....	5,261,000

What does that mean? It means that in the year under discussion Saskatchewan got only a little more than three-tenths of one per cent of all the contracts which had been let by the Canadian Commercial Corporation. As if to add insult to injury we find that Yukon got five times as much as the whole province of Saskatchewan. Would any hon. member, regardless of his politics, suggest that that is a fair allocation of contracts? The minister may say that Saskatchewan "has not been overlooked", but certainly in that year Saskatchewan did not get its fair share. Let me proceed. When this session opened I put a question on the order paper and I should like to place again on *Hansard*

[Mr. Thatcher.]

the questions I asked and the answers that were given, and I quote from page 451 of *Hansard* of February 19, 1941. I asked how many of the 80,000 contracts awarded in the first nine months of the current fiscal year with Canadian industry were placed in the various provinces, and their dollar value, and this is the answer that I received:

Yukon .....	\$ 254,000
British Columbia .....	33,574,000
Alberta .....	6,707,000
Saskatchewan .....	450,000
Manitoba .....	6,667,000
Ontario .....	214,436,000
Quebec .....	154,055,000
New Brunswick .....	5,468,000
Nova Scotia .....	23,003,000
Prince Edward Island .....	329,000
Newfoundland .....	402,000

In those nine months my province received one-tenth of one per cent of the defence contracts. The minister got up in the house and said that these figures represented only post office locations, and thus did not give the true picture, that they signified little. Perhaps they did not signify much to him, but I can tell him that they certainly signified a good deal to the people of my province. They signified rank discrimination against Saskatchewan.

A month or so later I placed another question on the order paper in order to try to have these figures brought up to date, but I was refused a break-down. The parliamentary assistant told me that the request was not a fair way to break down the figures, and therefore he did not think it would be in the public interest to bring in the return. It may not have been in the interest of his department, but I think the people of my province and of other parts of Canada were very interested in such a break-down. As far as I can see, the only reason they were not presented in that way was that the parliamentary assistant and the minister were a little ashamed of them.

Now we come up to the time when the Department of Defence Production was set up some two and a half months ago. I asked the Minister of Trade and Commerce another question on February 20, as reported on page 496 of *Hansard*:

Can the Minister of Trade and Commerce give any assurance that in future the prairies and the maritime provinces, and I refer particularly to Saskatchewan, will be given greater consideration in the allocation of defence contracts?

If I may presume to say so, the minister very facetiously answered me in this way:

That is rather like asking a man if he will stop beating his wife. We endeavour to distribute defence purchasing as equitably as possible as among all sources of defence materials. That has been and will continue to be our policy.