

case where trained men were laid off, right in the midst of our war effort; and two hundred men in a factory of that kind is a very large proportion. It was not that the men desired to quit; they were not going on strike. It was the very opposite; they were very angry because they had no jobs. Some of them said to me, "Is this supposed to be our war effort?" I was talking to one of these men in his home the evening after I visited the plant. He told me that for the previous two or three weeks these men had known that they were going to be fired, and do you know what took place? It was just exactly as I have stated in this house time and time again. These men were deliberately slowing down the work, not because they wanted to do so but in order that the job might hold out; and that was not against the rules of the management, either. I do not say that the company was making a greater profit, because it was a cost-plus contract, but certainly the cost to the government and the country was much more.

Those in charge of industry dislike very much having their men thrown out of work, because the management know that when they are asked to do another war job they will not be able to find trained men to do the work. But here were these men being laid off, with no orders at all in sight from the Department of Munitions and Supply. That was why I said to the Prime Minister a year ago that the policy of the government was wrong; and it was as a result of the policy of this government that this plant was forced to close down. They did not have even as much as a go-ahead letter in connection with another contract. They hoped to get another contract, it is true, but they did not even have a blue-print in connection with it. As it was explained to me at that time, if the management had been given even the blue-prints in connection with an expected contract, they would have been able to go ahead and prepare their plant, which would have enabled them to use some of these two hundred men, but that was not the situation. In fact I was informed that under the contract which they hoped to get—I emphasize the word "hoped"—they would not be allowed to make gun barrels. They were making gun barrels at that plant, but their equipment would have to be pushed to one side and left idle because they were being barred from the advantage of making the same type of gun which they had been accustomed to make.

I do not cite this as one particular case where the government has failed to give orders in sufficient time for an industry to be able to absorb its unemployed when one

contract was tailing off into another. Let me give the house the details of another absurd situation lest some hon. members think I am just a little prejudiced. I should like to refer to a speech made by a Liberal member of this house. I may say that I have thought there were not any good Liberals in the country any more.

Mr. HOMUTH: Are there?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): To my surprise, yes, there are one, two, or possibly three. Of course, I will agree with my hon. friend that they are as scarce as hens' teeth.

I should like to refer to one statement made by the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid) who I see is in the Chair at the present time. I hope some day he has that Chair. He said, as reported on page 133 of *Hansard*:

We have shipyards in British Columbia, at Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria and other points, which are not working to full capacity. I have in mind one now, a shipyard in New Westminster called the Star shipyards, which has eight ways; six of them are idle, and the other two soon will be.

I am sure that had the hon. member for Rosthern read that statement he would not have thought we were doing an all-out production job. The hon. member for New Westminster then went on to say:

There is no reason why these shipyards should not be working to full capacity, and every kind and type of ship should be built.

I agree with him one hundred per cent. That has been my greatest concern since this war started. I have made no bones about it. I have said definitely that I wanted to see this country producing to the maximum. I was convinced of this a year ago when I was speaking in this house, but the Minister of Munitions and Supply took exception to what I said. I see he is not in the house at the moment; in fact, with one exception, there are no ministers at present in the house. I suppose they are taking their cup of tea. The Minister of Munitions and Supply has taken exception at various times to what I have said, but the facts are there and not even he can get away from them. There is a terrible state of confusion in this government during war time.

Let me give the house another illustration, the Calgary rolling mills, to which I have referred before. From the very outset of this war I have advocated in this house that we should get the Calgary rolling mills going. There was a tremendous amount of opposition even to getting them started. They were going to move them to Vancouver at one time. Then they were finally started,