

Supply—Defence Production

importance that the small arms arsenal near Toronto and the gun arsenal at Longueuil should be operated by the government.

I regret that the government has announced that it intends to place the gun plant at Longueuil under the control of a private manufacturer and is permitting its use for the fulfilment of a private contract. That is clearly inconsistent with the policy established by this government, a policy which was first declared as the Canadian policy in regard to the production of weapons by the Conservative government led by R. B. Bennett. That policy has therefore been generally accepted on both sides of the house for many years. I hope the government will reconsider its position and decide that the guns to be made at Longueuil—and I am not suggesting that they should not be made there—will be made under government direction and control. I hope that the government will declare that it intends to continue the policy that weapons, as distinguished from general defence requirements, which in most cases are the by-product of normal civilian production, will be made in government arsenals, or in plants operated directly under government control.

I do not intend to enlarge upon the demonstrated danger of the activities of those who try to stimulate sales, or try to change the decision of governments as to the types of weapons they will use. The evidence in regard to that is all too clear over the years that have passed. I am satisfied that it was in recognition of the evidence to that effect that two succeeding Canadian governments of different political persuasion stated their belief that weapons which only have a military use, and have no normal market, should be made either in government arsenals or in plants operated fully and directly under government control. I leave that subject hoping that we shall receive reassurance on that score.

The people of this country are to be called upon to spend very large sums for their part in the defence of freedom. I am sure that they will willingly accept any burden imposed upon them which they believe to be a necessary part of our participation in that extremely important undertaking. I do think, however, that there is a sentiment, held very largely throughout Canada, that at a time when sacrifice for the defence of freedom is demanded not only of those who will contribute financially in the form of taxes or otherwise, but also of those who give personal service in the armed forces, that sacrifice should not be balanced in any way by profiteering on the part of those who are in a position to gain advantage because of the

[Mr. Drew.]

necessity for the sudden expansion of our producing capacity for the needs of this time. That is particularly true of equipment which is strictly of a military character, such as rifles, machine guns, artillery pieces, naval guns, rocket projectors, mortars and everything of the kind. I am sure it would give the people of this country a great measure of confidence in our own participation if that policy were strictly adhered to. I think also it would be an indication on our part that while we do not presume to interfere in the decisions of any government in regard to its domestic responsibilities, this country is very definitely against profiteering in the provision of the weapons of defence or war.

To refer back to what I said earlier about standardization: Whatever the reasons may be for failure to agree upon standardization, I do in all earnestness urge upon the Canadian government the immense importance of doing everything within its power to bring about the reconsideration of those decisions which could very well have disastrous consequences for us and for all the nations of the Atlantic community. It is not yet too late to step back from unwise decisions to make weapons of different calibres and different types in those countries which are seeking to combine their forces in Europe under General Eisenhower and elsewhere under combined commands.

I believe that Canada, making it clear that we follow policies in which no self-interest could be shaping our course, policies which have been clearly declared in the past, would be able to invite the nations to reconsider this matter, and perhaps in a way that no other nation could at the present time. If this emergency is as real and as great as it has been pictured to us, then no stone should be left unturned to give to the nations of the free world the greatest strength they can possibly have. Canada at this time can give leadership that may have tremendously important consequences for us and for all mankind in the years ahead.

Mr. Thatcher: Mr. Chairman, I welcome this opportunity to take part in the debate on the estimates of the Minister of Defence Production. I think most people in Canada will be pleased to have received the minister's statement. Some of us are at times not very happy with the methods the minister uses, but I think all Canadians will agree that he does seem able to get things done.

I must say, however, that in these two and a half months as head of the Department of Defence Production, the minister has not shown up quite as well as he usually does. He has not displayed his usual business acumen or his customary ability to get men