



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
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No. 52/4 CANADA'S MINERAL INDUSTRY IN NATIONAL DEFENCE

Text of an address by the Deputy Minister of Defence Production, Mr. M. W. Mackenzie, to the general meeting of the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy, made in Ottawa on January 23, 1952.

I was asked today to say something about Canada's mineral industry in national defence. I think, therefore, it might be well to start by examining what we mean by "national defence." In a period of total war, the meaning is pretty clear cut and the military aspects tend to override all other considerations. Today, however, we are not at war and we are not preparing for war. What we are doing is carrying out our part of an alliance which we have made with other like-minded nations to strengthen the defences of the free world, with all that that implies, so that any would-be aggressor will realize that his chances of success are not such as to merit the undertaking.

This approach to national defence must necessarily be many-sided. In the first instance, we have to build up our military strength; at the same time we must develop the resources that are needed to sustain a long struggle; and in addition, the civilian economy must be kept on an even keel. Nothing would suit better the purposes of those who believe in the complete supremacy of the state than to have the democracies of the Western world -- those who believe in the supremacy of the individual -- confronted with the serious domestic dislocations that would be caused by runaway inflation or a high level of unemployment. This is why, in considering our defence effort, we must keep in mind all the different aspects, for in this day and age there is little that goes on in the country that does not affect our common defence effort in one way or another.

There is, however, a special relationship in Canada between our direct military production effort on the one hand, such as the building of ships and aircraft, the equipping of our military force with weapons, clothing, and all the paraphernalia of war, and on the other, the development of our natural resources, particularly in the field of metals. This special relationship was recognized in the legislation setting up the Department of Defence Production and subsequently in its organization when it was established last April. In addition to the branches of the Department responsible for the procurement and production of military items, we have a Materials Branch responsible for the strategic materials needed to sustain a long-term defence effort -- steel, non-ferrous metals, petroleum, chemicals, and pulp and paper.