

*Supply—Defence Production*

**Mr. Drury:** No, Mr. Chairman. The undertaking is on the purchaser to ensure that the plant continues in operation for two years. That is the commitment. There is no commitment to remain as owner.

**Mr. Hopkins:** Mr. Chairman, I should like to say a few words about this matter. I do so with deep feelings because last night in this chamber an insinuation was made against the Minister of Agriculture who is my next door neighbour. I should like to read a brief extract from *Hansard*. The hon. member for Swift Current said:

Perhaps it is coincidental that in this case, in respect of which the minister sold the property for \$1, the property was located in a constituency represented by a minister of the crown, who is a contender for the Liberal leadership. Is there any connection in that regard?

**Mr. Drury:** I regret that the hon. gentleman should suggest that there is any possible connection.

**Mr. McIntosh:** I regret that I had to do so.

I should like to set the geographical statistics straight here and to tell the hon. member for Swift Current that—

**Mr. McIntosh:** Maple Creek.

**Mr. Hopkins:** I am sorry, Swift Current-Maple Creek—that he does not need to worry about this plant being located in the constituency of a person who is in the Liberal leadership race. The plant happens to be in my constituency, and there are so many capable men running for the leadership of the Liberal party already that I really do not think I will throw my hat into the ring.

**Mr. Fane:** You would do better than a lot of them.

**Mr. Hopkins:** I am always interested in the comments of the hon. member for Vegreville. I should also like to point out that the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek said—

**Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):** Page.

**Mr. Hopkins:** As reported on page 7831:

I do not agree for one moment that the minister did not dispose of an asset of the Canadian people. I should like to have had the opportunity to buy that factory for \$1.

I suggest that selling the plant to the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek would not be the solution to the economic

[Mr. McIntosh.]

problems of Renfrew county. The hon. member went on:

It would have been far better for the minister to have closed the factory and given it to the town, because it might have been of some benefit to the town.

This plant is located in a rural township, not in an incorporated town. What concerns me is that a member of the Conservative party is suggesting that an industry in my constituency should be closed. This is indicative of the attitude to eastern Ontario taken by the Conservative party for several years. They say nothing about the employment that this plant has provided in Renfrew county over the years.

In view of some of the losses that have been recorded I think I should point out that the magnesium business is very competitive internationally. It has also been stated that at the present time the plant has 184 employees, including 30 who have been added to the staff since Bartaco took over. It is said that 30 per cent of these employees have been with the plant for over seven years and the other 70 per cent for a lesser period.

It should also be noted that some special trades are employed such as metallurgists, radiographers, pattern-makers, core-makers, machinists, and so on. These people have homes in the area and deserve the consideration that the government has given them by keeping the plant open. I want to express my sincere appreciation to the government for so doing.

Another fact which should be stated is that since this is a magnesium foundry it is of limited use so far as any changeover or readjustment to another industry is concerned. Therefore the market for such a plant is relatively small. If this arrangement had not been made many families would have found themselves without income. Yet the hon. member for Swift Current-Maple Creek suggests that it should have been closed down. I say this shows a callous disregard for humanity.

● (5:40 p.m.)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Hopkins:** This government—

**An hon. Member:** What page was this on?

**Mr. Hopkins:** —is spending millions of dollars to keep people employed in the Cape Breton area and as a Canadian and a friend of the Minister of National Health and Welfare I support this program wholeheartedly.