

On section 10—Regulations of imports and exports of arms, etc.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Mr. Chairman, on the whole I think the government is to be commended for having introduced a provision of this kind. Undoubtedly the arms industry occupies a place by itself, and private individuals ought not to be allowed to import, export or transport arms without any regulation whatever. I am glad also that this section provides not merely for the licensing of arms but also for any articles "deemed capable of being converted thereinto or made useful in the production thereof." That will include certain articles which undoubtedly should be included. It does not seem to me, however, that the section goes anything like far enough to control armament production, and on the other hand it does place enormous power in the hands of the government.

As I see it there are three or four groups whom we would have to consider in this connection. There are groups of private individuals who may be importing or exporting arms. There are friendly nations to whom we might export arms. There are enemy nations to whom some armament firms might try to export arms, and then there are the neutral nations. Before such great powers are given into the hands of the government we ought to have some sort of policy laid down with regard to how these different groups are to be treated. For example, are we to allow practically wholesale export of arms to neutral nations? I do not think that matter has ever been discussed in this house. There should be some fairly clear understanding with regard to government policy before such great powers are put into the hands of the government. Further, while one does not like to think of any sort of undue influence being exerted by armament firms, I do urge that with the millions of dollars which may be here involved the situation is perhaps not carefully enough guarded. Let us look at the penalties under the second subsection:

(2) Any goods imported or exported contrary to the provisions of this section or of any order of the governor in council hereunder or regulation established thereunder shall be seized and forfeited; and any person importing or exporting the same or causing or permitting them to be imported or exported shall be guilty of an offence and for each such offence be liable on summary conviction before two justices of the peace to a penalty not exceeding two hundred dollars and not less than fifty dollars, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year and not less than one month or to both fine and imprisonment.

May I point out that in the manufacture and export of armaments millions of dollars are involved. This penalty is altogether inadequate.

Mr. ILSLEY: Read the last part of the section.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I shall.

Mr. ILSLEY: A million dollars is not involved when the value is only \$200.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It reads:

If the value of such goods is two hundred dollars or over, the person so offending shall be guilty of an indictable offence and be liable on conviction, in addition to any other penalty to which he is subject for such offence, to a penalty not exceeding one thousand dollars and not less than two hundred dollars, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding four years and not less than one year or to both fine and imprisonment.

Surely in comparison with the greatness of the crime involved in the violation of this section, the penalties are very small indeed. One can imagine the millions of dollars involved in the production of armaments, and if a man can go on violating the law with a penalty as slight as this one, it is almost an encouragement to such violation.

There is another and more important matter which I wish could have been introduced by the government. I should like to see not only licensing of the export or import or transport of armaments, but legislation making it impossible for private individuals to make profits out of war. I think that is the least that can be done to-day. At this late stage of the session I do not wish to go into any general discussion of this question, but all hon. members know that many private investigations with regard to armament profits have taken place. The League of Nations has reports in the matter, and not so very long ago there was an investigation in Great Britain. Further, there was an elaborate inquiry in the United States. The enormous fortunes made out of war are now pretty generally known by the public, and the people are also beginning to get a glimmer of the crooked methods used to foment war scares in order that such profits may be made.

With war such a horrible business, and in view of the fact that the last war almost wrecked civilization, bringing even our own country to the verge of bankruptcy, we must not take the matter too lightly. When war breaks out we are asked to send tens of thousands of our best young men to fight; yet we have allowed armament profiteering. We allow a course of action which may precipitate war. In my judgment the least that