

*Supply—Defence Production*

**Mr. Dufresne:** Who can give me the information? If the minister cannot give it, who can? After all, it is his department. He is supposed to be head of it. Does the minister say that he cannot give me an answer?

**Mr. Green:** Would it be possible to get the information?

**Mr. Dufresne:** Will the minister give me the information?

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Mr. Chairman, government arsenals carry on work as it is given to them. Last year the arsenals system did work to a value of about \$80 million, and the year before to a value of about \$75 million.

**Mr. Dufresne:** That has nothing to do with my question.

**Mr. Dickey:** Yes, it has.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Well, if a certain line is running in the month of December, the men are working on that line. If it is not running in the month of December the men may be laid off temporarily. I do not think any man could possibly compile an employment statement for Quebec arsenals since 1951. I could not do it, anyway.

**Mr. Dufresne:** The minister does not receive any report on these arsenals?

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** No, not that kind of report.

**Mr. Dufresne:** Oh. I shall note the answer the minister just gave me.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Fine.

*(Translation):*

**Mr. Dufresne:** Mr. Chairman, the situation of arsenals throughout Canada seems to be just about normal except in and around Quebec city. Merely for the information of the hon. minister, I take the liberty of telling him that, since last fall, more than 2,000 employees of our arsenals have been let out and, as a result, the already alarming unemployment situation in and around Quebec city has become even worse.

When I directed questions about this to the minister and to his parliamentary assistant, the minister told us that there would necessarily be dismissals at the Valcartier and Quebec arsenals because there were no contracts. I could not help wishing, at the time, that more contracts were to be had. Then again, I indicated to the minister that, since the government has managed to get

millions in profits out of the Quebec and Valcartier arsenals, I failed to see why those millions could not be used to transform those war plants into peacetime industries.

During the last war, billions of dollars were spent on the production of armaments; today, when there seems to be a willingness to walk, haltingly perhaps but none the less surely, along the road to peace—a peace for which everyone is yearning—we are told of a lack of contracts. I do not see why this should not be a proper time to make use of those profits which have been accumulated, and to convert those war plants into peace plants, and, at the same time, answering the needs of our population by supplying Canadians with jobs.

Mr. Chairman, on the 1st of June last, speaking on behalf of a substantial number of electors from the riding I have the honour to represent here as well as from surrounding constituencies, I urged the hon. minister to institute, if not a royal investigation, at least a judicial inquiry on certain irregularities which are taking place at the two arsenals I have already mentioned, that is Quebec and Valcartier, where a substantial amount of goods are being filched and used to the personal advantage of a few people.

**Mr. Lesage:** Would the hon. member permit a question?

**Mr. Dufresne:** Certainly.

**Mr. Lesage:** Has the hon. member any definite information about the misappropriations just referred to?

**Mr. Dufresne:** Mr. Chairman, in reply to the hon. minister I might say that, for some time, I have been meeting a large number of people who have had jobs, or still have jobs, at the arsenals. I have in my office voluminous correspondence on the subject. In fact, I have been provided with names. But it will be admitted, surely, that I am no government detective and that it is no business of mine to investigate the matter.

I now demand what I have already demanded as a member from Quebec city, a serious investigation of certain irregularities which, I repeat, have taken place and are still going on daily in the arsenals at Quebec and Valcartier. That request of mine was made on June 1. Although we have now reached the 15th of July nothing has been done. And I keep receiving letters asking what the government intends to do and requesting that I speak on behalf of the honest people of the city of Quebec—