

duction while we could go a long way towards meeting wartime needs, it may be desirable for peacetime purposes, as well as to meet an emergency to increase productive capacity and as you know, the government has been for some time considering this with representatives of the industry.

(3) The Role of Your Regiment

The importance of the Sault in the transportation system of the continent, taken together with your importance as a steel producer brings home the necessity for your having effective defence measures here.

You are rightly concerned about the safety of these important links in the chain of our security. For this reason I am particularly interested in seeing the progress made by your Regiment. This is one of the vital points in Canada and the United States which must be guarded against sabotage or other damage by the combined efforts of the forces of the two countries. Under the arrangements for joint defence, this is one of the matters actively receiving consideration.

As you know, it was decided to convert you into a heavy anti-aircraft regiment because this seemed to be a place where such a regiment would be justified. While Canada is fortunate in that there are not very many vital points which would compete in attractiveness for the use of the very few and very expensive atomic weapons that an enemy might have, we must see to it that effective steps are taken to ensure that everything possible and practicable is done to protect such points in the event of an emergency.

On this account, your Regiment is more important than ever. It deserves every possible support.

I know very well what form you would like that support to take. You need an armoury as badly, if not worse, than any regiment in the Province of Ontario. The priority of the need has been recognized. One of the main purposes of this visit is to enable me to see at first hand the conditions here. Whether or not it will be possible to begin construction in 1949 will depend on the extent of the construction programme that the Cabinet will authorize and that Parliament will approve as well as on the local availability of labour and materials.

Let me give you just one or two facts and figures on this which will make it clear to you why it has not been possible for us to proceed before.

Since the war we have been organizing the active forces to meet the modern defence needs of Canada. This has involved the location of the forces at many isolated centres. The great proportion of the men in the armed forces are veterans. They had been separated from their families for a good many years. A greater proportion than ever before were married. Our aim has been to provide the active forces of Canada with the conditions and amenities of a good life in a good community. We could not do this without constructing married quarters. From my appointment two years ago I gave married quarters top priority in our construction programme. In consequence, since the war, we have completed 5,347 married quarters and we hope to complete between now and March 31, 1949 another 2,013. We are finishing them now at the rate of about 20 a day. You can imagine what this means in the way of improved morale, as officers and men, sharing alike (except that the officers pay more for the same quarters) become re-united with their families in the exceedingly good quarters that we are building for them. During the fiscal year of 1948-49 we will be spending more than 30 millions on married quarters alone, a good deal more than the average expenditure on all defence purposes prior to the war. We have an even larger programme planned for 1949-50. That is good news to the men in the active forces and there are 38,000 of