

Defence Production Act

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): I shall be expecting him back. I am very happy, Mr. Speaker, that this debate has been carried on on a very pleasant basis with everyone, despite the heat, in pretty fair humour.

An hon. Member: That is what you think.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): I think a remark was made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I made a very complimentary remark about him a few minutes ago, and I hope he reads it in *Hansard*.

Mr. Martin: I was just told about it, and I am still blushing.

Mr. Fraser (Peterborough): I do not know how much it takes to make the Minister of National Health and Welfare blush so it can be seen through the tan, but I imagine it must take quite a bit.

The minister with this bill reminds me of a farmer who used to live near Albion Mills, just east of Hamilton on the way to Niagara Falls. When I was a small boy in Hamilton, on Good Friday we would all meet, take lunches with us and head for Albion Mills where we would go for the first swim of the season. The old farmer objected to our taking a short cut through one of his fields, despite the fact that it was only a pasture and there were no animals in it at that time of the year. One Good Friday morning when we were heading through the field we heard a loud noise in the woods beside us and discovered that this farmer had fired a shotgun at us. We found later that he had loaded the gun too heavily with rock salt and it had backfired on him.

That is exactly what has happened to the Minister of Defence Production. He has loaded this Bill No. 256 a little too heavily and it has backfired on him, and likely he will keep on hearing the repercussions of it for some time to come. The minister may be a little more careful in future as to what he tries to force on the people of Canada. They can stand just so much. There is a limit to what they can stand.

The hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Zaplitny) said on the 5th of July that the people of Canada are concerned only with defence appropriations, as to whether or not they are spent to advantage. That is right as far as it goes, but there are also other concerns. One of these is this. Is every purchase made by this defence production department necessary? We have many questions on the order paper. Some time ago, before the 1953 election, there were hundreds of questions on it. Information was brought out in the answers to those questions to the effect that many of the articles that were bought were not necessary; for example, 11 pairs of socks for every

[Mr. Howe (Port Arthur).]

man and woman in the armed services, and so on. Eventually they had to be dumped on the market and sacrificed at the taxpayers' expense. The money came out of the taxpayers' pockets. It is a question as to whether this department needs to stock up so heavily. This affects the pocketbook of every taxpayer, and that is the man or woman who is interested in this bill.

What would happen if the wrong man were in charge of this department? Although the present minister says he will be here for some time, you can never tell. He might change his mind. Ministers of the crown have changed their minds before. I know it is said that a woman changes her mind very often and that is why a woman's mind is so clean. If the minister would only change his mind in regard to this bill and stop insisting that it be passed at this time as is, I feel quite sure that his mind would be clear, free and clean, and he could go on his fishing trip and enjoy himself.

As I said before, industry has had a good word from the present Minister of Defence Production, but now there is a doubt in these people's minds as to why he needs these controls, and as to whether or not it is a good thing to give these powers to the Minister of Defence Production without any strings whatever attached. It is true, as the Minister of Defence Production says, that new ideas of defence are coming forward every day, such as supersonic missiles. The supersonic missiles that might be designed today will be absolutely outdated six years from now, which is the time the minister says it will take to produce them. If you read some of these science fiction books and so on you will find these supersonic missiles and many other things that years ago we thought were absolutely impossible and only to be found in fairy tales. Today they have become an actual fact.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I am obliged to advise him that his time has expired.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggart): Mr. Speaker, this is the first time I have participated in this debate, which I have been following with a great deal of interest. It seems to me that the crux of the whole question before the house at the present time is very simple, namely whether the minister is to be given this power indefinitely or whether the house is to place on the minister and the government some time limit. In order to bring this controversial debate to an end, I am of the opinion that the government would be wise to announce here at this time that when we move into committee the government will be prepared to suggest that