

*War Appropriation Bill*

men believe the pay is too low, and the company will not cooperate with the men. That is the information I have from inside that plant. I do not vouch for it, but I offer it in good faith and suggest that it be the basis of an investigation.

Mr. HOWE: I would be very glad to have that situation looked into, and I will do so to-morrow. The suggestion has been made—and it is a fair one—that the work of the Department of Munitions and Supply should be divided. There are two sides to that question. In England there are three departments purchasing supplies. The navy department purchases its requirements. The Department of Supplies purchases the requirements of the army, and the Department of Aircraft Production purchases for the air force. I have yet to find—and my colleague the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Ralston) may have a view in the matter—any great enthusiasm for dividing purchasing in that way.

As a matter of fact, I saw a cartoon by Low which appeared in Lord Beaverbrook's own paper. It showed Lord Beaverbrook and his three busy bees. They were crouched in an alley, while three very respectable gentlemen, Mr. Alexander of the navy, Sir Alexander Duncan of the supply board, and Mr. Bevin were approaching along the main street. Lord Beaverbrook has a blackjack in one hand and a revolver in the other, and a fiendish light in his eye. Apparently Beaverbrook and his gang were to take what supplies the respectable ministers had with them. This cartoon was obviously intended to illustrate the subject of common gossip in England.

The trouble is that with three departments in the same market there is bound to be competition among the three. The navy may place an order in one plant. Then the supply department may come along and think that it requires the capacity of that plant to produce for the army, and as a result may give it too large an order. Then the aircraft branch comes along and gives orders for aircraft parts, on top of all this. There you have a company that is overloaded, and will disappoint someone—and probably all three. That is the difficulty.

In the United States there are two purchasing departments. The army buys for the army. In connection with the army there is an aircraft section which buys aircraft for the army. The navy does its own buying, and buys aircraft for the navy. Then, the president has set up a coordinating committee, and that coordinating committee is attempting to set up an overriding organization which will

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

coordinate the purchases of both. I was told in England, however, and I have been told repeatedly in the United States, that we are fortunate in Canada to have a single buying authority for all military needs.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I think the principle is sound, and I am bound to say that to the minister.

Mr. HOWE: That, I think, is obvious. It is better to have a single buying agency.

Whether or not the work is too heavy, I do not know. I always regard it as a challenge, not to my industry but to my organizing ability. I do very little work round the department, I may say. If anyone comes to me and wants an order for something I simply say, "I do not place orders. I am not the man who places orders. Go to see So-and-so, who is handling the matter." If it is a general purchasing matter I would send him to Mr. Malkin's department; if it were a matter of purchasing munitions I would send him to Mr. Drysdale's department; or if it were an inquiry respecting the purchase of guns I would send him to Mr. Carmichael. The work is departmentalized, and as a department grows top-heavy we subdivide, and may subdivide it again. That is a process of organization.

Whether two ministers could organize better than one, or whether three ministers might do better than one, I do not know. That, too, I believe is a question which has two sides to it. I am not taking either side. I took the department as it was organized by parliament. If parliament, the Prime Minister, or anyone else wishes to subdivide it and give me part of it, then that will be all right with me. Or, much better, so far as I am concerned, if it were divided into three parts, and those parts were given to three other men, and I were permitted to go back to the Department of Transport, I would be the most delighted man in Canada.

However, we have that problem. But because it is a large problem, I scarcely believe it is worth while to describe myself as overloaded, overworked and so on—I believe those are the adjectives which are usually used. I doubt if that is so. I think it is possible for one man to create a big organization. There are many big organizations in the world which function efficiently. I may not be the man to do it; however I am trying to do it, and I suggest that we must be given credit for the fact that while we are a mushroom industry we have expanded very rapidly and up to this time have been able to carry on without a major scandal and without any serious break-down in the supplies which have been expected by the army, the navy and the