

War Appropriation Bill

governments of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and India, and two or three governments outside the empire.

Mr. MacNICOL: That is, purchases in America?

Mr. HOWE: Purchases in Canada. That work has grown to very large proportions; I am not denying that at all. I doubt whether hon. members have any real idea of the proportions to which it has grown, but I illustrated it a day or two ago when I said that whereas the first Bren contract, which was regarded at the time as quite considerable, called for 5,000 guns a year, the house would not believe me when I informed it that the present contracts with the Bren company called for a production of 97,500 a year or 19½ times the original number. And yet people have to be convinced that this is so—the very people who every few days make the charge that nothing is being done by Canada in organizing the productive capacity of the country.

Anyone who will take a railway journey through the maritime provinces will see our railways in that section taxed to capacity. The ports of Saint John and Halifax are overtaxed in the effort to move the products of Canada destined for war areas. Anyone who takes that trip should think back and reflect upon the fact that this situation is due to the productive capacity of the country organized for war.

As to whether the department is cumbrous and amorphous, I looked up the dictionary to make sure that I had the right meaning of the word "amorphous." I find that it means shapeless or unorganized. Is the department unorganized? I have here an organization chart which is kept up to date for each month. It shows the direct relationship between the branches of the department, to whom they report, and by what channels they reach the minister for such decisions that have to be made. I wish to place this chart on *Hansard*.* It might be interesting to hon. members.

As to whether the department is reaching the breaking point, I read in the press daily that my health is breaking down, that I am close to the breaking point, though personally I have not noticed anything of the kind. My own view is that I should be the first to notice such a thing. Others may think I should be the last to be aware of it, but I know that the Prime Minister keeps a very careful eye on the work of all departments and I am perfectly sure that if I were past or even near the breaking point he would so advise me and assign me to less onerous

*See chart following page 1042.

[Mr. Howe.]

duties. That is his responsibility, and I have not the slightest doubt that he will discharge it. I want no sympathy for myself. I did not ask for the job of minister of munitions; it was assigned to me. I took it because I thought it was my duty to do so, and I intend to fill the position until I am asked to assume other duties or to step down. If in carrying out the duties of the office I break down, that will be no one's loss but my own.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The country's loss.

Mr. HOWE: I ask for no sympathy on that score. As to whether the department has reached the breaking point, to my mind the Department of Munitions and Supply is just as virile and as able to carry on to-day as it was when I took over. We keep it alive by constantly infusing new blood into it. Not a month passes but we ask a prominent executive, some man who has established his ability as an executive in Canada, to take over some of the work of the department. In the last month we have asked four prominent executives to lend us their services. One is Mr. Harry Carmichael, who left a position carrying a very large salary as vice-president and general manager of General Motors Corporation of Canada. We requested him to work for the Department of Munitions and Supply without salary. We have taken in Mr. R. C. Berkinshaw, general manager of Goodyear Tire and Rubber company. We have taken in Mr. Brown, an important executive of the Canadian Bank of Commerce, and Mr. Joseph Piggott, one of the most prominent contractors of the country—all giving full-time work without salary. I doubt whether they would have left these important positions to join a department that is "cumbrous, amorphous and reaching the breaking point."

I do not wish to stress this point but I think I speak for the many executives who have left prominent positions in civil life to work with the department when I say that we ask for no sympathy so far as the personnel of the department is concerned.

It has been said that we are working without a plan. The leader of the opposition said that while Mr. Purvis knew exactly where he was going, the Department of Munitions and Supply was working along from day to day without a plan and without an objective. I have here two letters that are interesting on that point, though they are not of importance otherwise. One is addressed to Mr. Fairweather, the director-general of the economics and statistic branch, by the head