

Supply—Defence Production

An hon. Member: But not too early.

Mr. Hansell: If he answers the question yes, that the situation will be materially changed, then he is telling the country that the whole defence production of the country is administered on the basis of patronage. If he says no, the situation will not be changed, then he will be telling the country that he is running the productive affairs of the country irrespective of politics, and they will not then be able to play politics in the election with respect to contracts. I believe that the minister should answer that question, and answer it yes or no.

Mr. Ferrie: What about Ontario? They are getting all the money.

Mr. Gardiner: Why are you saying "if Mr. Tucker"?

Mr. Hansell: Evidently there are some other members who would like to get the floor. They can have it when I sit down. I am not from Saskatchewan but I am asking the question because I believe it is pertinent and I think the minister should answer it. It is all very well to say that in the letting of contracts each province must get its fair share, but that suggestion must be qualified. I think it is a matter of a fair share under the productive circumstances of the province, and I think that is what the minister has in mind. You cannot give contracts to people who are not capable of handling them. Take the matter of electrical power. There are some provinces that might be short of electrical power. They may be running at capacity, and there is no use bothering. I think we have got to be fair in our analysis of the ratio of contracts.

Personally I have no particular criticism or complaint to make, and that is partly due to the experience I had during the last war. I do not believe I went to the government once to ask them to push anything my way. I do not believe I did. I went to various officials of the government and laid the cards on the table with respect to certain things. I know that during the last war I had six air training or auxiliary schools in my constituency.

An hon. Member: What are you kicking about?

An hon. Member: You did well.

Mr. Hansell: I remember on one occasion I told a Liberal I had that many and he said: "My goodness, what pull have you got with the government?" I answered that by simply telling him that his constituency was in a mountainous region, and it was obvious that you could not put air training schools in a

[Mr. Hansell.]

mountainous region. I think that the government was pretty honest and fair in their locating of air training schools when they put six of them in my constituency, and I am not the only member from Alberta who had such schools in his constituency. There were many others. I think the engineers were honest in their appraisal of territory, climate, winds, and everything concerning the training of airmen. Of course there may have been another reason. They may have thought that if there was an attack Alberta, and Macleod particularly, would be blown to kingdom come, but I think that would be stretching the imagination.

I have no particular criticism to make in the matter of contracts. However, I come to the first item now before us, and I believe that the minister must give us a more detailed break-down. I refer to the item of \$5 million for departmental administration. The \$5 million is not involved in the paying of contracts or paying for defence production. It is simply administration of the department. Five million dollars is a lot of money simply to administer a department when they are not buying anything. I have compared it with other departments of government. Possibly my comparison is not altogether fair for the reason that all departments do not break down their administrative items in the same fashion. Of course this department is new, it has been set up just this session; but I look at some of the other departments. Here is agriculture, and the first item for administration amounts to about three-quarters of a million dollars. Here is citizenship, about a quarter of a million; here is external affairs, two and a quarter million; here is fisheries, a little over a quarter of a million. Justice is about three-quarters of a million and labour a little over a half million. Here is finance, one and a half million. Of course there is another item under administration that I should mention, the comptroller of the treasury for which there is the considerable sum of twelve million. Here is mines and technical surveys, and the item for departmental administration is less than half a million. Here is health, less than half a million. Post office is less than half a million; public works less than half a million; trade and commerce a little over half a million; transport over a million, and veterans affairs two and a quarter million for administration.

When we come to this Department of Defence Production, however, we are staggered with a figure of \$5 million. I thought I would like to see what that covered, so I turned to the break-down on page 143. The