

*Supply—Defence Production*

be a decision to produce equipment which can be used most effectively by the forces engaged in a common defence effort which we all still earnestly hope will preserve peace where it exists and restore it in those areas where there is now real war. The hope of peace—and our thoughts should be concentrated on that reason for what we are doing—largely depends upon the effectiveness and efficiency of the efforts that are made, not by Canada alone, not by the United States alone, not by Great Britain alone, not by France alone or by any other country acting alone, but by all the free nations working together to put the skill and the vitality of the energy of their people to work in one common cause in such a way as to produce the best results. The thing which will be most likely to deter the men of the Kremlin from any aggressive act which would precipitate another holocaust on the scale of a world war is the knowledge that all the immense skill and productive capacity which they envy, and which they fear as much as and perhaps more than the atom bomb, is being put to work to achieve the greatest possible result. Failure to standardize weapons will in itself be something very encouraging to the men of the Kremlin.

It is not our right, and it is certainly not our duty, to criticize the action of any other government with respect to the domestic affairs of the country in which that government has its responsibility. But when it has to do with matters in which we have a common interest, then I submit we not only have the right but the duty to say what we think should be done to achieve the best results in the common cause in which we are engaged. I do not think it is necessary at this stage for us to determine who is or is not to blame. What we are confronted with is the real and alarming fact that a dangerous, frustrating and possibly disastrous decision appears to have been made. It is not only the right but the duty of hon. members of this house, as well as members of the British House of Commons or of the congress of the United States, to indicate in the clearest possible terms what they think will best contribute to the combined strength of those nations which are associated in one of the greatest causes in which they have ever been jointly engaged.

It is not too late for those decisions to be changed. It is not yet too late for the governments of the United States, the United Kingdom, and all the Atlantic powers, as well as the powers generally associated in the United Nations, to meet and discuss this vitally important subject, because production

is not yet far advanced in these new types of weapons. According to a Reuters dispatch appearing in the press of Canada today, in answer to a definite question the Minister of Defence, Mr. Shinwell, definitely stated in the British House of Commons that the British government has made up its mind to produce small arms—rifles and machine guns—of .280 calibre as soon as possible. In response to further questions which were asked on that point, Mr. Shinwell expressed the opinion that there perhaps need be no great cause for concern as to the effect of such a decision on the close co-operation of the defence forces of the commonwealth in the years ahead.

As a Canadian and a member of the Canadian House of Commons, and expressing my opinion as a Canadian with an interest in the joint effectiveness of all our plans for defence, I submit that this is a misconception of what the consequences will be of such a decision. I am not suggesting that the fault lies with the government of the United Kingdom alone. It may well be that the fault lies equally with the government of the United States for failure to standardize. That is not for us to say; but I suggest it is for us to say that, no matter who is to blame for the failure to standardize so far, we in this house want to see that measure of standardization which will produce the maximum effectiveness of the armed forces we are called upon to raise.

I do not think that the Canadian government is called upon to accept silently any decision of that kind. As an increasingly important member of the Atlantic community and the whole community of free nations, Canada is perhaps in a better position than any other nation today to say to the two leading nations of the west that we want to see standardization come before it is too late, and to urge that we have further meetings and try to avoid the conceivably disastrous consequences that might result from a decision of this kind. The failure to standardize small arms, artillery pieces, rocket launchers, mortars and other projecting equipment of all kinds might mean the difference between victory and defeat if unhappily we are ever called upon to resort to force of arms to defend our freedom.

I have raised this question today, Mr. Chairman, because a very real danger now confronts us. The United States has announced its decision to produce .300 calibre rifles and machine guns. The government of the United Kingdom has announced its decision to produce rifles and machine guns of .280 calibre. The government of France has announced its decision to manufacture rifles and machine