

Supply—Defence Production

sufficient in contemplation to assure the employment of the present workers? There is a history of aircraft manufacturing in that plant, and I suggest that the minister knows how many workers are required to fulfil certain contracts of the department. Combining those two factors, surely he can tell the committee whether there are sufficient contracts to assure that the workers will be continually employed.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): There are certain data that have not been fed into the machine yet. One item of data would be what is the future of the peace of the world. There are various other factors. What are the requirements of the R.C.A.F., and what will be the views of future parliaments as to the amount of money that should be appropriated for the building of aircraft? If we knew these factors we could come closer to a prediction, but even then I doubt whether we could make an accurate prediction.

The purpose of producing munitions is not to provide employment. The purpose is to defend Canada. As Minister of Defence Production I would not want to go any farther than to say that if weapons are required for the defence of Canada and money is supplied to the armed services, we shall endeavour to take care of the procurement as best we can.

Mr. Pallett: That is perhaps a partial answer to the first part of the question, but what about the second part? If the minister is not sure about sufficient defence requirements to ensure employment, may I ask him if any consultation has taken place between his department and Avro with respect to the manufacture of civilian aircraft so they may get into the transport business and maintain their present nucleus of aircraft workers?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): If Avro can dig up any transport business we will be very glad to discuss with them the possibility of undertaking contracts in their plant. I do not know of any transport business going, as a matter of fact.

Mr. Pallett: It is my understanding that at one stage of their development they designed and developed a jet transport that at the time was comparable with anything then on the market, and that if it had been developed, and promoted and certain modifications made they could have obtained a very important part of the transport market. That is my information. I also understand that as a result of necessary defence orders placed by the department, further steps were not taken. There was a direct interference that precluded them from getting into that market

[Mr. Pallett.]

and probably had an effect on the future of the workers of the plant. Once the department takes people out of a certain field it seems to me it has a responsibility to assist them in getting back into it.

Mr. Macdonnell: I want to ask the minister one more question. I want to be quite clear that the minister has told us that these English people who control Avro are free from any restriction of any kind, that this deal was carried out absolutely on their own without reference to or even knowledge of the department, that it was absolutely their own affair, and that that is the whole story so far as the minister knows it.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): That is a correct statement.

Mr. Macdonnell: I want to raise a question with regard to crown assets, and I am not quite sure whether I had better do it at this time or later.

Mr. Dickey: Item 89.

Mr. Green: The annual report of the Department of Defence Production for the year 1954 shows that at the end of that year there were 1,509 employees. It also showed that there were 23 men from industry employed under the Defence Production Act, four of them serving the department without salary. Could the minister give me corresponding figures as of the present time?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): As of June 30, 1955, we had three unpaid workers from industry; we had seven on part salary or fee or honorarium, and five on full salary. Those are special appointments, not through the civil service. You will find that we now have 15 men—

Mr. Green: That is 15 instead of 23?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): That is right. We are working in the direction, for the long pull, of having the department staffed entirely by civil servants. We have 196 permanent civil servants and 1,309 temporaries, or a total staff of 1,520 persons. I am happy to say that the permanents were men who came from other departments of government, and I am glad to say that the 1,309 temporaries can now become permanent.

Mr. Green: The total is 1,505, is it?

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): Yes, plus the 15 above, making a total strength for the department of 1,520.

Item agreed to.