

# CAREFUL ATTENTION IS GIVEN GIGANTIC TASK OF SUPPLYING VITAL NEEDS FOR WAR EFFORT

MILTON SPECTATOR  
AUG 30 1940

## Department of Munitions and Supply Toils Night and Day in Co-ordinating Tremendous Transactions

### Seven Main Branches Care For Orders Ranging From Tooth Brushes to Monster Bombing Planes and Tanks

(By James N. Crandall, British United Press Staff Correspondent)

Ottawa, Aug. 30.—In a grey wooden building, hurriedly constructed following the outbreak of war, 650 men and women work night and day to keep the army, navy and air force adequately supplied. Here on Wellington street, at the west end of Parliament hill, the department of munitions and supply has its headquarters. And here every order from a tooth brush to a greatcoat; from a rifle to a fully equipped and armed bomber, must be carefully scrutinized.

#### Spend Million a Day

The board is spending an average of \$1,000,000 daily on supplies. A part is for the British government, but the great majority is for the Canadian troops, the navy and the air force.

In the plant survey and production department long rows of filing cabinets bring a wealth of information concerning Canadian industrial plants to the finger tips of officials whose duty it is to keep a steady flow of material, of standard quality, at the disposal of the fighting forces.

A regimental quartermaster may be requisitioned for 50 rifles. He passes his order on to divisional headquarters, which in turn hands it over to the department of national defence. The department then places the order in the hands of the department of munitions and supply.

If the department does not have the guns on hand, the filing cabinets are referred to. Under the caption Rifles are listed the names of firms which are manufacturing this specific weapon or are capable of their production. Under the same listing will be the name of other firms whose plants could be converted into rifle production.

#### Build Up Surpluses

Tenders are then sent to the plants which the board feels are best equipped for immediate production. In the cases of large orders the work is spread among as many plants as possible so that production will not be delayed.

Huge surpluses of war materials of all sorts are being built up by the board and shipped to divisional points where they may be most needed. Other reserves are being kept at divisional points ready for immediate shipment to either the army, the navy or the air force. Every possible requirement of every branch of the service is cared for in this way.

One example of the wide variety of articles handled by the board is the recent announcement that since the outbreak of war a total of \$44,000 worth of false teeth have been ordered.

Since the outbreak of war orders totalling more than \$300,000,000 have passed through the hands of the board. Of this amount \$22,266,000 has been placed with firms in Great Britain; American firms have received orders for almost \$7,000,000 worth of goods and materials. The huge majority, totalling more than \$271,000,000, has been placed in Canada.

#### At Highest Peak

Board officials admit that the orders are only beginning to come in. While production and employment figures are not available, it is admitted that Canadian plants are producing at the highest peak in history and that with every passing day this pace is being accelerated.

Bottle-necks have developed in some sources of supply, but have been easily overcome by calling on American industry. While no real shortage of skilled labour has yet been felt, government officials are looking ahead in order to avert any serious handicap.

With national registration completed, each card is being carefully studied, and the capabilities of every man and woman in the country will be catalogued. Soon every skilled technician will be listed and he can, if need arises, be drafted for service in any plant producing war materials.

#### Has Seven Branches

The munitions and supply board is divided into seven main branches—clothing section, aircraft section, tools, machinery and hardware section; lumber, furniture and wood products section; motor vehicles section, naval and militia section, barrack stores section. Each department is headed by executives fully trained to meet the requirements of their particular divisions. The government has established six companies to handle the production and buying of war materials and has aided private industry to enlarge plants to meet requirements. Plants now under construction involve a capital expenditure of \$120,000,000. When they are completed they will have a productive capacity of \$500,000,000 per annum. Two of the government-owned companies were organized to protect the supply of necessary imported raw materials which might be subject to interruption. It is the duty of these companies to keep in stock a considerable supply of these materials and to sell them to companies handling government contracts as circumstances warrant. In order not to defeat the purpose for which they were established, the names of these two companies and the commodities they handle have been kept secret.

As a connecting link between government and industry, controllers have been appointed with regulatory powers, in the lumber, petroleum, steel and non-ferrous metal industries. These controllers can purchase, expropriate, manufacture and take virtually any steps in the mobilization of industry required to further the war effort. The effective prosecution of the war demands that there be an uninterrupted flow of basic commodities to supply the industries directly engaged in the production of war materials.

#### Prevent Shortages

It is the duty of these controllers to see that these commodities are made available. Under normal conditions industry may be safely left to fill its varied requirements through normal channels of trade. In times of war, control by government becomes necessary to prevent shortages; and if shortages do occur, to allocate existing supplies to essential industries.

The part which the department of munitions and supply is playing in the war is one of the most vital in Canada's whole-hearted effort. Unclothed, un-fed and unequipped soldiers are of no value, and it is the duty of this department to see that a steady flow of needed supplies is kept moving, that further supplies are stored, ready for immediate transfer, and that the industrial production is kept ahead of the demand so that shortages will not occur.

086-842-822