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The Madsen Machine Gun

1918.

623 Madsen -
96.

DANMARKS
TEKNISKE BIBLIOTEK

(Teknologi)

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THURSDAY, 6TH JUNE 1918.

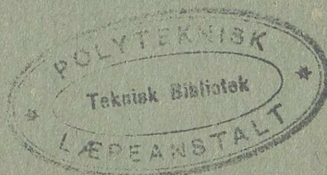
Vol. 30. No. 35.

OFFICIAL REPORT.

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Madsen

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THE MADSEN GUN.

Lord BERESFORD had the following Question on the Paper—

To ask His Majesty's Government—

1. Whether information can be given relative to the Danish Madsen machine-gun.
2. Whether the Danish Madsen gun weighs only 15 lbs. as compared with the Lewis gun of 28½ lbs., the Hotchkiss gun of 28 lbs., and the Vickers gun 68 lbs., including mountings.
3. Whether the Danish Madsen gun is superior in every respect to the Lewis and Hotchkiss guns now in use.
4. Whether (except for aircraft) the Lewis and Hotchkiss guns are no longer in use with any Army other than the British, and if it is a fact that these guns have been superseded even in the countries of their origin, viz., America and France.
5. Whether the Danish Madsen gun was tested in 1915 at the Machine Gun School in France, and strongly recommended.
6. Whether the Commander-in-Chief has asked for 2,000 Danish Madsen guns to be immediately ordered for issue to the troops.
7. Whether the official report of the H.M.S. »Excellent,« Whale Island, is not strongly in favour of the Danish Madsen gun.
8. Whether the newest model of the Danish Madsen gun was tested by the Small Arms Committee at the School of Musketry, Hythe, in January, 1918, with the most satisfactory results.
9. Whether the Danish Madsen gun was tested in May, 1918, before a very great number of machine-gun experts of the Army, and whether these experts have reported on the gun, unanimously, and strongly recommending it.
10. Whether the Ministry of Munitions has had the Danish Madsen gun thoroughly tested, and recommended it to be introduced into the Service.
11. Whether the present Prime Minister, when Minister of Munitions, ordered 5,000 Danish Madsen guns to be manufactured for the Army.

12. If it can be stated why this Danish Madsen gun, which has been proved superior in all respects and admirably suited for Infantry, Cavalry, Aircraft, and other Arms, has not yet been taken into the British Service; and to move a Resolution.

The noble and gallant Lord said: My Lords, I have rather a considerable string of questions on the Paper. I have to apologise for that fact, but I find that in technical matters, unless you place on the Paper all you want to know, it is very hard for the Government to answer you. The subject that I wish to bring before your Lordships' House is one of vital importance. In my opinion if the gun which I am going to describe is not adopted it may end in defeat for our forces, and it will most certainly end in the prolongation of the war. The gun in question is named the Danish Madsen gun. It was invented in 1905, and has been through various stages of alteration and improvement until now its accuracy and manufacture are such that no fault whatever can be found with it.

Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to state my qualifications for attempting on this occasion to be a machine-gun expert. Some thirty years ago I was so impressed with the value of the machine-gun that I invented the galloping machine-gun for the Cavalry. That gun was invented by me to solve certain difficulties such as Cavalry being sent on to ridges, bridges, and cross-roads to hold them. In many cases they could not hold those places when the enemy's Infantry came up, but with six of these guns they could hold the positions, if once they got them, until their own Infantry came up. Cavalry officers of that day were very pleased with the gun. They were most anxious to get it, and I think a noble Lord in this House who was then in the 10th Lancers will support me in saying that that regiment when it got the gun first was extremely pleased to have it. At one moment I was the only man alive, I believe, who had fought in action with machine-guns both ashore and afloat.

That reminds me of an incident. A foreign gentleman came over with regard to the Gatling gun, which had a better feed, and offered me a large sum of money

to write a letter about his gun. I said »I cannot do that. If your gun is a good gun I shall try to get it into our Service.« He said »Every man has his price,« and he asked me my price. I said »Yes, that is quite true; my price is £3,000,000.« He put on his hat and said he thought he could get »better than me cheaper than that,« and I never saw him again.

Then I mounted the gun in the Sudan. I must tell your Lordships that these guns were originally mounted as guns—that is to say, they not only had the gun carriage but they had the limber—and in the Sudan, where you have suddenly to go into action, it delayed you a great deal (more particularly when fighting in a square) if you had a limber. I invented a gun on two wheels pivoted in the middle as if it was a limber, and on the same lines as a limber, but it was in action directly the train was dropped, either front, rear, right, or left. Personally I have used in action the Gatling, the Gardner, and the Nordenfeldt; and what made me think of the galloping carriage was that at Alexandria, where I was landed to restore order, I had only one machine-gun, but my men had to haul it, and naturally they got exhausted. We did not fire into those unfortunate people; we fired over their heads; but by the machine-gun we were enabled to clear the town of those people much more quickly than we could by any other means.

All the guns I have described, of which I had command in those days, were faulty. They were faulty because you had to do four things at once, and if any one of those things went wrong it put the gun out of action. You had to load, fire, extract the empty cylinder, and revolve the gun; and if any one of those things went wrong it jammed the gun and put it out of action. I have very good reason to remember this jamming of the gun, because at Abu Klea we had a machine-gun of which I was in command. We ran it out on the left flank, which was attacked. I was laying the gun myself, and the effect of it on the crowd of Arabs coming on was extraordinary. They were falling like ninepins in tens and twenties; but when they got within about 30 yards the gun jammed. We had the feed-plate lifted up to try and find out the cylinder which had the flange

pulled off the extractor, and the first sign I had was the feed-plate hitting me on the head and knocking me under. As a matter of fact that saved my life, because every other man with the gun was killed.

These guns have never been appreciated. The first machine-guns in action were the French mitrailleuse in 1870. The Germans were so afraid of these guns that they devoted the whole of their Artillery batteries to putting them out of action. They nearly always succeeded in doing this, because the French worked the guns as batteries instead of working them as sub-divisions independently. By sub-divisions I mean a battery of six guns, half-battery three guns; two guns is a division, and one gun a sub-division. These guns ought to be worked in sub-divisions, and close together where they can get cover and in other cases far apart. The only time they ever really got into action against the Germans was at Mars-la-Tour, where they managed to get two batteries going without being interfered with by artillery. They killed thousands of Germans, and, incidentally, cut a whole avenue of poplars straight off exactly as if the trees had been cut down by swords. As a matter of fact, a few months after this occurred I was there and saw it myself.

There have been immense improvements made in the machine-gun. When we went to war we had only two guns to each battalion; the Germans had sixteen guns to each battalion, and they took to the machine-gun many years after we knew all about it. The advantage of a machine-gun is that it has no nerves; it is no target; and six of them are equal to any battalion of Infantry you might select working with rifles. When speaking of this Madsen gun I would say that I have no personal interest in it of any sort or kind. I have thoroughly examined it; I have seen it practised; and I firmly believe that it is the most wonderful gun that has ever been invented, and that it is imperative that we should get it into our service. I think it would be far wiser to call it a machine-rifle and not a machine-gun, because it really is a rifle.

Let me now refer your Lordships to the weights of the different guns. We have three guns in the Service now—the Lewis for the trenches and Infantry; the Hotch-

kiss for the Cavalry; and the Vickers for points of defence. The Danish gun weighs only 15 lbs. if it is fitted with a heavy barrel—that is, 5 lbs. more than an ordinary rifle; but if fitted with a long, light barrel, the same as the Lewis, it would weigh only 14 lbs. The heavy barrel, however, is a distinct advantage. The Lewis gun weighs 28½ lbs.; the Hotchkiss 28 lbs.; and the Vickers 68 lbs. The Vickers is an excellent gun, and I believe it has been improved; but it is a gun entirely for defence and not for offence—I am talking of the Infantry—as you cannot carry it easily. The spare parts of the Madsen gun are one-third lighter than the Lewis; and the magazine filled up with 3,600 cartridges—that is, in magazines, not one magazine—is 67 lbs. lighter than the Lewis. This is an enormous advantage if you want to move a gun quickly. I do not think we can overrate the value of the Vickers gun for defence; but for trench attack, for air attack, and for tanks, it is not as good as the Danish gun would be. The total weight of the Madsen gun and spare barrel, with 3,600 rounds, is 83 lbs. lighter than the Lewis gun. The Danish gun is superior to the Lewis—which is the trench gun at present—in every singular particular. If your Lordships will allow me I will enumerate in what particulars it is superior.

The first advantage is that it can keep up a sustained fire of 18,000 rounds. That has been done. This means, of course, changing the magazines which hold forty-four rounds each. The Madsen gun cannot jam. It operates by recoil, and not by gas—as do the Hotchkiss and the Lewis guns—which fouls the mechanism; the gas makes the mechanism and cover hot as well as the barrel. The mechanism of the Danish gun is extraordinarily simple, far more so than either the Hotchkiss or the Lewis. The gun can be fired from the shoulder like an ordinary rifle, with the bayonet fixed; you can fire standing or kneeling or in any position without any support whatever. As I have said, the magazine holds forty-four rounds, and the gun can fire 400 rounds in a minute.

Another advantage of the gun is this. As your Lordships may know, if the enemy see a machine-gun about, whether it is being carried or in action, they concentrate the whole of their rifle fire upon it;

but this gun could not be told from an ordinary rifle at a distance of 100 yards. A further advantage is that the men can be trained to handle it very quickly; it can be handled as easily as a rifle, and you can fire a single shot from it simply by touching a lever at the side—as long as you keep your finger on the trigger the gun fires the same as a Maxim does. The Madsen gun is mechanically sound in every respect. Another great point is that the men can be taught to take this gun to pieces and to assemble it again, to drill at it and to work at it, in about twelve hours; whereas it takes about three weeks to teach the same men to do the same thing with the Lewis.

If taken to pieces, the parts of the Madsen gun are only seven. The parts of the Lewis gun are eighty-six, and among those eighty-six parts is an enormous lot of springs, which, as your Lordships know, are a weak point in any rifle on active service. In my opinion the Danish gun is superior for either attack or defence—certainly for attack. With a gun of this kind there may be raised, of course, the old argument—as to its capability for firing 18,000 rounds an hour—that you would soon get through your ammunition. But I want to point out that you do not want to fire 18,000 rounds in an hour; what you want to do is to fire at that rate for two or three minutes, and you will have plenty of ammunition. I have known this old matter of ammunition for many years. When I went to sea in 1859 we had the same guns as Lord Nelson: our main armament was 32-pounders and 18-pounder carronades, muzzle-loading, cast-iron guns. When I was a midshipman we used to fire at the rocks and other targets of a like nature on the shore, and I have frequently been sent to pick up the shots we had fired and to bring them back to the shot-locker so as not to waste ammunition.

Then we came to the breech-loading gun, and the same argument was advanced again. Then we came to the quick-firing breech-loading gun. The improvement in gunnery of the quick-firing breech-loading gun over the breech-loading gun was enormously more than the improvement of the breech-loading gun over the old muzzle-loading gun, but we had the same

thing occur then. I think the complement of a six-inch breech-loader was about 110 rounds, and that of a quick-firer six-inch gun went up to I think 300 rounds. With heavy guns we have more ammunition and have to carry more, but the argument about the ammunition has been used every time and on every occasion of an improvement in the guns, and has always been falsified when we have got into action and had to use the guns. Now the Danish gun has fired 18,000 rounds an hour, and the Lewis gun 3,000 rounds an hour—at that rate. Another point about the Danish gun is that if it misses fire, which jams most of these machine-guns, by the lever in the right hand side the cartridge is ejected and the gun goes on firing. It is a question of two seconds, and so the gun cannot be jammed because the cartridge misses fire.

The magazine feed is a wonderful invention. The magazine itself is a shell—a curved piece of aluminium. I have seen men walk over it, and horses can walk over it, and it is much lighter than the magazine of any other machine-gun and much stronger, and it has the advantage of being able to be refilled with its forty-four cartridges in half the time. After 1,000 rounds the Danish Madsen gun gets red hot—the barrel. That barrel can be shifted in fifteen seconds with bare hands—I have seen it done—because, as I have already explained to your Lordships, the casing and the magazine do not get hot as it is a recoil operation and not a gas operation for loading and working the gun. The Lewis gun gets hot in 500 rounds, and takes twenty minutes to cool before you can again use it. The Danish gun can change the barrel in fifteen seconds; the Lewis gun may take twenty minutes before you can change the barrel. The Lewis gun gets hot in 500 rounds, the Hotchkiss in 800 rounds, and the Madsen in 1,000 rounds. In my opinion the Danish gun is superior in all respects, and mightily superior, to the Lewis and the Hotchkiss. The Lewis is the gun of the Infantry upon which we depend for our victory or defeat in the future, and the Hotchkiss is the Cavalry gun. Neither of these arms compares with the Danish gun in efficiency, rapidity of firing, lightness, and fewness of spare parts, or in any other re-

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spect that appertains to an efficient machine-gun.

Now, this gun has been tested. It was tested in the Machine-Gun School in France in 1915, and was strongly recommended. When Lord Kitchener was Minister for War in 1915, and when Lord French had seen or heard about the gun, 2,000 of these guns were ordered for the Army. The Naval Machine-Gun School at Whale Island—the most critical school of gunnery in the world—tried the weapon thoroughly and repeatedly, and reported strongly in its favour. When Mr. Churchill was First Lord of the Admiralty after this report he ordered 400 of these guns. Further, the Small Arms Committee School of Musketry at Hythe tested it in January, 1915, and reported most satisfactorily on the results of the gun. A large number of machine-gun experts—officers and men who have been fighting these guns since the war commenced, some of them as far back as Mons—took this gun and tried it exhaustively, and last month they unanimously and strongly recommended it as the very best weapon of the sort they had ever seen. I believe the Ministry of Munitions recommended its introduction into the Service. I think the present Prime Minister when he was at the Ministry of Munitions ordered 5,000 of them, and, your Lordships must remember that the latest pattern Madsen gun is infinitely superior to the Madsen gun of two years ago. All these improvements have been made in the last two years and have put this gun right at the top of the tree, so far as a gun of that character can go.

Now, may I give my own experiences of the gun. I have stated various points which I think are most interesting, and I may say most marvellous, relative to the extraordinary superiority that has been brought about in this gun over other guns. I saw these trials carried out last month—everything that I have told your Lordships with one exception. I have not seen 18,000 rounds fired, but I have seen 2,000 rounds fired. I saw some eight or ten trained machine-gunners from various regiments who have been fighting machine-guns in the field. These men tried this gun, took it to pieces, assembled it, fired it, and fired it standing and kneeling without any support, and I asked each one

of them individually what he thought of the gun, what other guns he had fired, and where, and I found their experience was something extraordinary. Their enthusiastic support of the Madsen gun after they had fired it and after they had been drilled with it and knew how to handle it and assemble it, was remarkable.

I saw a Danish officer, Lieutenant With Seidelin, who was over here with the gun, himself stand up and fire 1,320 rounds with the gun at his shoulder as if he were firing a rifle, and with bayonet fixed. He fired thirty magazines without stopping, each magazine holding forty-four rounds. It was to me an amazing performance. This officer stood up and he had in front of him the ordinary bank of earth to put the fired rifle bullets into, and he splayed it, and I am perfectly certain that two battalions each armed with this gun could hold three divisions on a limited front. Nobody could pass it, because it cannot jam, as I have already described. I then saw this Danish officer take the gun and throw it in the air and it landed somewhere on the hard ground, and then he went on firing. I then saw him after he had fired 1,300 rounds, the barrel being red hot, throw it into a ditch containing some two feet of water, slime, mud, and weeds. Of course, the water hissed. He left it there for a short time. When it was cool he took it out, and then fired it, covered with slime, mud, and weed, for 220 rounds. He could have fired another 1,200 rounds. There is no other gun in the world which can do that. It is perfectly marvellous.

To my mind, the answers given in the House of Commons were most unsatisfactory. The Minister of Munitions, Mr. Churchill, acknowledged that there were certain points of advantage in the gun. There is every point of advantage in this gun, every single point that you can name. To any man who knows anything about a rifle or a machine-gun there is no point of disadvantage in it, and I would rather that the right hon. gentleman had said that. Nobody in the War Office or in the Admiralty or among our experts can name one point of disadvantage in this machine-gun. It is the first machine-gun ever invented in regard to which you could not

pick out six or seven disadvantages, which in some cases we never really got over.

I appreciate the difficulties of the Government; I do not want to add to them. As I have told your Lordships, when we went to war we were criminally short of machine-guns. The value of the machine-gun has been found out more in this war than in any other because of trench warfare. What happened? The Government did their best. They set to work, got the industrial owners together, and said »You must turn out as many machine guns as ever you can.« They set all the industrials they could get hold of to make the Lewis gun under contract whereby these industrials would be paid for every gun they could make. No matter how many thousands were made up to the end of the war, all would be accepted. I think the Government were quite right to do that under these conditions, but now that this gun has come to the front, I see their difficulty. It is not, however, a difficulty that is insurmountable. If they were to go to these industrial owners and say they must have this gun, there are three things which they could do. They could turn over some part of the industrials to the making of the Madsen gun, because I must tell your Lordships that the same machinery will do for the Madsen as does for the Lewis. Of course you will have alterations. You have to alter the fixtures, and clamps, and gigs, and gauges. I acknowledge that the gauge question is a very difficult one. It is one of the most difficult scientific and mechanical questions we have to face. You want new gauges and new tools. Every one who knows anything about the lathe knows that the same lathes can put in many different tools; you have only to make the clamps a little different and set in the tools. The Government must not interfere with contracts without seeing the people with whom they contracted. Our people are very reasonable, and if they see this gun is going to win the war, or to shorten the war, or is going to save our men's lives and kill more Germans, I am sure they would come to the help of the Government. The Government could either take over some of the industrials who are making the Lewis gun, or could go to other industrials that have shafting and straps and boilers and engines but do

not have the requisite tools and gauges—industrials who are making things not absolutely necessary for the war. That is my proposal.

My third proposal is to grasp the thing and set up a factory exclusively for making this gun in this country. Of one thing I am certain. Unless you take this gun up, and if the enemy should get it, they will beat you. That is as certain as that I stand here. I say that from my knowledge of machine-guns and the long practice I have had with them. These are the suggestions I make to the Government. I know their difficulties, but there is no reason why the difficulties should not be faced. They must lay themselves out somehow to get hold of this gun, because, as I say, if the enemy get hold of it they will beat you. Of that I am satisfied. It is a gun superior to other guns in every one of the particulars to which I have alluded.

I want the Government to answer certain questions. I want to know why were the orders given for the supply of this Danish gun turned down? Two factories, I think, were started in this country for the making of this gun, under the orders of the present Prime Minister. They were stopped in 1916. They were actually begun and money spent on them. Why were they stopped? I want to know why, when the Danish gun was strongly recommended more particularly by Cavalry men after they had seen it and tested it working with other guns in exhaustive trial, it was not given to the Cavalry. The authorities state that it is impossible that we could get this gun. I want to know why. Nothing is impossible. You cannot say that we had made these contracts and must go through with this other gun. They can argue that if they take this Madsen gun while they are so pressed for machine-guns the step will temporarily stop a certain supply. I agree, but the same thing applies in ordinary industrials. In the industrial with which I have been connected, if we put up a tool that cost £1,500 we scrapped it in six months because we could put up a tool with a bigger output. We were wise. All those who are connected with manufactories know that that is the principle. The principle is to get the output. Scrap all your tools, but not before you

have got other to put in their place. In this case you can put this in its place in an incredibly short time. Taking the balance you should run this little risk of not being able to continue your supply of so many thousands a week as that you may get an infinitely superior weapon, which, when you get it, will enable you to shorten the war. The Brazilians have this gun in large numbers. That is the gun of the old pattern. The Bulgarians have 600 of them. The Germans have some of them, but they are of the old pattern which do not fire the same ammunition as the Infantry. If your Lordships go to the War Exhibition you will see one of these guns which came from Bulgaria. It was actually taken by some of our men in battle.

There is another point which I wish to bring before your Lordships, and it is a very material point. The authorities who have turned down this gun have never seen it—not one of them. They might have seen the gun in a room, but they have never seen it under trial in practice with the men drilling it, and they have not seen it fired. That is all wrong. The authorities should not decide that they cannot have this gun because they have contracts or because the supply may be temporarily or infinitesimally stopped. They have not seen the gun. The gun is so superior that anybody who looks at it, whether or not he knows anything about a gun or a rifle, will see what an extraordinary weapon it is and how necessary it is that we should put it in our men's hands. The authorities have turned it down though every single expert, no matter who he was, of both Services has been loud in his praise of the gun. The Army in France has never seen the gun, and I do not believe the Commander-in-Chief even has. He has not seen it tried. With all the advantages I have enumerated I must ask the Government to be good enough to give me a clear explanation why this gun has not been adopted, and I hope they will give your Lordships some indication that they are going to do their best to meet the difficulties, which I acknowledge they labour under, and get this gun put into the British Army as soon as ever it can. It will do more to end the war than any other weapon we can produce.

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The factors for winning the war are, first, the indomitable grit and heroism of our men, which have been seen all through the war and will continue. The second is the Air Service—and here let me point out that the efficiency and effectiveness of the Air Service will be enormously increased by the adoption of this gun. It is lighter, easier to handle, it does not get hot so quickly, and the barrel can be readily changed. These things make it a very much better weapon for the Air Service than the gun they have now. It will mean a hundred-fold improvement if the Air Service is fitted with this gun. I know there is one objection to it—namely, that it is shorter, and that it is necessary not to show a flash in the air in order to avoid making a target. The gun did throw a tremendous flash, but a flash absorber has been placed on the muzzle (which I have seen) and it has eliminated the flash altogether. Even on that point it is a better gun than the one they have now.

The third factor for winning the war is machine-guns in the field. This is, perhaps, the most important, and that is why I am so anxious to see this gun adopted. I need not remind your Lordships how often our men have to go over the top; come out of the trenches and charge down under a fire of hell over to the enemy's trenches. Fancy a man with this light weapon, which he can fire from his shoulder without having to lie down or kneel, going over the top. It would give him an enormous advantage compared with having to carry along the Lewis or Hotchkiss gun. There have been thousands of men killed and hundreds of trenches lost on account of the jamming of the Lewis gun. I have already explained to your Lordships my experience of jamming. This gun does not jam; and not only that, it has a most clever contrivance—a steel scabbard for its bayonet which fixes on to the gun, and the bayonet on to the scabbard, making it considerably longer than the German rifle with the bayonet. When I saw the Danish officer fire the gun the bayonet was fixed during the whole of the 12,000 rounds, so that you have all the advantages of the rifle (which has a bayonet and five cartridges) plus a machine-gun that is altogether only 5

lbs. heavier than the rifle. Imagine a battalion, or two battalions, each man armed with this gun. They would themselves hang up and hold three divisions on the limited front which they covered.

I know every one of your Lordships will agree that it is our bounden duty to give our gallant men the very best weapon we can possibly give them, independent of price, of trouble, or of contracts. This is the best weapon that has ever been seen, and I say there should be no pedantic opposition to its being at once placed in the hands of the Army. I understand the Government's difficulties, but I hope they will meet me and do their very best to surmount these difficulties. Personally, I will do my level best to get the gun into the Army, the Air Service, and the Cavalry, as soon as it is possible to do so. I am afraid I have detained your Lordships rather long, but I have given you a statement of facts. I have attended the trials, seen other experts who might have had different opinions from mine, and we are all unanimous, strongly unanimous—men who have worked with machine-guns in the field (which I have not) and have seen the practice and trials of the Madsen gun—that this is the best gun that it is possible to invent. I do not think I need dwell any longer on the subject. I have told your Lordships the gun's advantages, how it has been tested, and given you the different weights as compared with the Lewis and Hotchkiss guns. With your Lordships' permission I will conclude by moving a Resolution.

Moved to resolve, That a full inquiry should be made by a Committee of machine-gun experts into the capabilities of the latest pattern of the Danish Madsen machine-gun, and that one of these guns should be sent to British G.H.Q. in France and submitted for trials there by expert demonstrators.—(Lord Beresford.)

Lord ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, the question of the Madsen gun which has been raised by the noble and gallant Lord, has excited so much interest in both Houses of Parliament and throughout the country that I think it will be with the approval of your Lordships if, instead of merely categorically answering the lengthy series of Questions on the Paper, I take

rather a broader and more general review of the whole situation affecting this gun. The Questions on the Paper seem to me to be framed almost with a view of extracting from an unwilling spokesman on behalf of the Government a series of admissions as to the good qualities of the gun. I should therefore like to take this early opportunity of saying that, from the information which is before me, it is acknowledged by all who should know the gun in its present form to be a very good gun. I will go further. The gun is in some respects, and for certain purposes, acknowledged to be superior to the Lewis or Hotchkiss gun in use to-day. It is quite true, as the noble and gallant Lord suggests in one of his Questions, that it is lighter in weight, and I do not propose to quarrel with any of the statements he has made or to follow him over that ground. I understand that with certain alterations which will be necessary to suit our requirements, in the event of adopting this gun, the weight would be increased from 15 lbs. to approximately 16 lbs. However, that is a very small matter.

Lord BERESFORD: Does the noble Lord know what these alterations are?

Lord ELPHINSTONE: I think there is a question of the lengthening of the barrel. As I say, it is a small question against the weight of the Lewis gun which, as the noble and gallant Lord stated, weighs about 28 lbs. It must also be remembered that in order to get full advantage from the Madsen gun you have to carry a spare barrel involving an addition of, I think, something approaching 5 lbs. in weight.

As regards the various trials to which the noble and gallant Lord refers in Questions No. 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10, trials were in each of these cases carried out with, I understand, very satisfactory results. I think, therefore, that there is very little difference of opinion between us regarding the actual merits of the gun; and, as stated recently in another place by the Minister of Munitions, supposing we were to-day commencing the war, so to speak, *de novo*, it is possible that the Madsen gun in its present form might quite well be adopted in preference to the Lewis or any other gun in use to-day, though I

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would rather hesitate to say this definitely, as it is not impossible that we might be in a position to adopt an even newer and more perfect weapon owing to the progressive improvement in science in these days. But to adopt the gun at this stage of affairs is an entirely different proposition, and one that involves certain considerations which possibly are sometimes overlooked by the advocates of the Madsen gun.

Let me refer for one moment to the practical position as it has to be considered by the military authorities. We have to-day a Lewis gun. I am told that it is a magnificent weapon, and a very much improved one since we introduced it into the Service. It is a gun which no doubt has proved its value on many occasions, and in regard to which, so far as I am aware, no single adverse military report has ever been received. It commands, I am told, universal confidence in the Army, and is now in use in its scores of thousands. The House will, of course, realise that I cannot present any figures, but I may give your Lordships some idea of the enormous output to-day if I say that every week now we turn out more machine-guns than our total stock at the outbreak of the war. Not only have we our present machine-gun in scores of thousands, but you must also remember that there are the gunners who are trained and being trained in its use. We have training schools in many centres, and we have countless depots for spare parts. We have huge factories gradually built up and equipped, and now at last, after many weary months, pouring out a steady stream of machine-guns on which the military authorities can count with absolute certainty. To achieve this has not been the work of either days or weeks, but of many laborious and anxious months, running into years.

What would be the result of changing this to-day, or of introducing a new type of machine-gun? I know quite well that optimistic promises have been made as to the marvellous results that would follow in some three or four months, but I can only say that the whole of our very large and varied experience at the Ministry of Munitions goes to show that those optimistic estimates are very seldom, if

ever, realised. On the contrary, it is estimated that before any output worth mentioning could be obtained a minimum period of probably about a year would elapse. I do not think that it is always realised by people what is involved in starting now on any new manufacture, especially manufacture on such a large scale as this would be. Meanwhile, what would be happening. If we desire to manufacture Madsen guns, one of two things would have to be done. If the supply were to be in addition to the present supply of machine-guns, factories would have to be erected and equipped and new machinery made and the factories manned with labour. It is obvious that this would take a very considerable time; and, in addition, it would make a further serious inroad on the manpower of this country, and contract still more what is now one of the most important supplies of men for the Army. I am told that the military authorities attach importance to this consideration.

Another thing that would happen is that by increasing the number of types of weapon in the hands of our troops you would inevitably incur all the drawbacks and difficulties of duality, not only duality in manufacture here and in the provision of spare parts both here and in the field, but duality in the training of the men and of the use of the gun in the field. I understand that these considerations have also weighed heavily with the military authorities in coming to the decision that they have up to now come to. These, my Lords, are the considerations if you manufacture the Madsen gun in addition to the present machine-gun.

If, on the other hand, it were decided to adopt the Madsen gun with a view to ultimately replacing the present gun, the procedure would be this, I imagine, in order to save time and get the work done as quickly as possible—and I think this is the method that is advocated by the noble and gallant Lord opposite—that you would divert to the manufacture of the Madsen gun a portion of the present machine-gun factories. The House will realise that a machine-gun cannot be made in any shop by any labour and on any machinery. It requires very special machines and very highly skilled labour. This course would obviously decrease the out-

put of the present machine-gun. Clearly the more Madsen guns you aim to produce the more machinery and men you would have to divert to that purpose, and the result would be a corresponding decrease in the output of the present type of gun. Though you might quite conceivably in the future put into the hands of your troops a better weapon, you would in the meantime be depriving them for a certain period—or rather, I am afraid, for an uncertain period, and that is the danger—of what is, when all is said and done, a very good gun. This is the danger that the military authorities are extremely loath to run. The great thing, I am told, from their point of view is to be able to count with certainty, as they now can, on the steady and uninterrupted flow of what, as I have already said, is a very good gun. I submit, my Lords, that a question of this sort, which is one of weighing the advantages against the disadvantages, can and ought only to be decided by the military authorities.

The noble and gallant Lord asks in Question No. 6 whether the Commander-in-Chief has asked for 2,000 Danish Madsen guns to be immediately ordered for issue to the troops. When I read the Question I understood from its language that he must be referring to the present Commander-in-Chief, but I rather gather from his speech that he was referring to the late Commander-in-Chief.

Lord BERESFORD: Lord French.

Lord ELPHINSTONE: I understand that the late Commander-in-Chief, the present Lord French, did ask in May, 1915, for some Madsen guns. I am told that no special number was mentioned. As the House will recollect, there was no Ministry of Munitions in existence in those days, and so, speaking on their behalf, I am afraid that I am unable to give any more definitive information on that point. But one thing, I think, we must recollect in this connection is that at that date not only was there no Ministry of Munitions but there was no Lewis gun in the hands of the troops. I cannot help thinking—although I do not know—that this request of Lord French was probably much more a request for machine-guns rather than

a request for a supply of this particular type of machine-gun. But I cannot speak with any authority on that point. The present Commander-in-Chief has never asked for any Madsen guns. Not only has the Army Council in London not been up to now in favour of any change, but General Headquarters in France have also expressed their opinion that the disadvantages of adopting at this stage a new type of gun outweigh the advantages.

I may add that quite recently the present Minister of Munitions, who realises to the full the value and merits of the Madsen gun, brought the question of its adoption once again before the military authorities in France. He was himself present at the discussion which followed, and came away very much impressed by the unanimity of the military opinion then expressed. It is quite true, as suggested in Question No. 11, that the present Prime Minister when he was Minister of Munitions did order 5,000 Madsen guns in 1915, and, as the noble and gallant Lord has said, a factory was erected and equipped to carry out this order. There were endless difficulties at that time, but eventually, just before work was about to commence on the production of these Madsen guns in this factory, the War Office intimated to the Ministry of Munitions that they did not require those 5,000, or any of those Madsen guns, which therefore it was obviously no use our making. At that moment the most crying need was for aero-engines, and it was asserted that the whole future of the war depended on the increased supply of aero-engines. In view of this very urgent demand and in view of the fact that the War Office did not require the Madsen guns, the Ministry of Munitions decided, as it was very suitable, to divert the factory which had been intended for the manufacture of Madsen guns to the manufacture of the famous Rolls-Royce engines, and this, I think, has been amply justified by the results obtained. It must be remembered that when the War Office refused these Madsen guns the supplies of Lewis guns and the increase of the Vickers gun were secure, so that the position was very different, from the War Office point of view, from what it was six months before.

Lord Elphinstone.

I fully recognise the very evident and legitimate anxiety of the noble Lord as regards this gun. On the other hand, I am quite sure that he is as anxious as any of your Lordships, or as I am, that we should not in any way interfere with or dictate to the military authorities as to what type of gun or shell, or any other munition, they should use, but rather that the moment they ask us for anything, whatever it may be, we should do our utmost to supply them with it. As the present Minister of Munitions said recently in the House of Commons, the principal function of his Ministry is to supply stores on the requisition of the Army Council; and in view of the past record of the Ministry—in spite of certain criticisms that have been levelled at some of its procedure—I personally feel confident that, supposing circumstances change and we are asked to provide the Madsen or any other type of gun, somehow or other we will, as we have always done in the past, find means, however difficult it may be or however impossible it may appear, not to fail our men in the field, but to fulfil their requirements and give them all they want.

I think I have now to the best of my ability, though I have not dealt with them *seriatim*, answered all the questions which the noble and gallant Lord asked, and I hope I have shown that the non-adoption of the Madsen gun hitherto has not been in any way on account of any doubt as to its value as a gun, but solely on account of what I might call administrative and manufacturing difficulties, and because it was feared, for the reasons I have already given, that the introduction of a new type of gun threatened to interfere with the steady flow of the existing type, and this the Army authorities in the field regard as a very grave and serious danger. I am glad however, to be able to say, on behalf of the War Office, that further consideration of the whole matter leads us to hope that a way out of the undoubted difficulties may yet be found. This is at the moment the subject of very careful consideration and investigation by the War Office in close consultation with the Ministry of Munitions, and I think I may say that both Departments are anxious

to find a solution of the difficulties in order, if possible, to undertake the manufacture of this gun.

The noble and gallant Lord will, I hope, see from what I have said that everything possible is being done at the moment in the direction which he desires, and I doubt personally whether your Lordships will consider it necessary to appoint a further Committee of machine-gun experts to inquire into the merits of the gun, because really there is no difference of opinion on that point. It has been tested, as we know, by experts more than once—so recently as this year—and the question to be decided is not one that can be decided by machine-gun experts. We acknowledge the qualities of the gun. The difficulties to be overcome are, as I have already said, administrative and manufacturing difficulties, on which, of course, this Committee of machine-gun experts could give no opinion. I hope that the noble and gallant Lord may consider that my reply to his numerous questions is a fair and satisfactory one.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: My Lords, there was much in the earlier part of the noble Lord's speech which was not very encouraging. But when we reached the end of his observations, there was a note which I confess reassured me to some extent. I shall have a word to say upon that in a moment. But I should like to say at the outset that none of us feel inclined to find any fault with the Ministry of Munitions in the matter. We recognise that their attitude is absolutely correct. They are there to provide the weapons which the Army needs, and they have just announced through the mouth of the noble Lord that they will endeavour to comply with any requirement which the military authorities may put forward. Whatever difficulties there may be, the Ministry of Munitions will endeavour to surmount them, and, judging from their record in the past, I have no doubt that if they do their best they will surmount them.

I will go a step further. We do not criticise the Ministry of Munitions, neither do we desire to force any policy as to machine-guns upon the War Office. Of course, the military authorities must deci-

de. It would be absurd for any of your Lordships to try to take the decision out of the hands of the military authorities and to tell the Commander-in-Chief in the field that he ought to use a different machine-gun from the one which he prefers. Our function is a humbler one. It is to press upon the Government the immense advantages of this gun, and then to leave the decision in their hands.

The noble Lord who has just sat down spoke of the objections to changing guns at this period of the war. All those objections, of course, are very obvious. Everybody may say that we have a gun which is a good gun; that it is better to stick to a good gun than to run the risk of all the difficulties involved in trying to establish a better gun. With objections of that kind we are very familiar, and they are not unfounded; there is a great deal in them. But it is really a question of the balance of advantage. If the Madsen gun is so very much better than the existing gun, it is worth while undergoing a certain amount of temporary disadvantage in order to secure the advantage of the gun. That is the real point—How much better is this Danish gun than the existing Lewis gun? I am sure that your Lordships will believe me when I say that I, at any rate, do not profess to be in any sense an expert in the matter of machine-guns; but I will go this length, that having seen this Danish gun I was deeply impressed by its simplicity, by its ingenuity, and by its efficiency, which I will say makes it certainly not only superior but enormously superior to any other gun in the field. That may not be a strong enough argument to convince the Army Council that they ought to change the gun; but at any rate, they ought to realise it. That is the point above all others which we desire to impress upon them.

Do the Army Council realise it? Have they taken any steps to realise it? Have the Army Council ever inspected the gun? Have they ever seen it fired? Has the gun ever been taken abroad to G.H.Q.? Has it been fired in the presence of any superior military officer over there? I dare say there may be some answers to these questions; but if not, then I say that the advantages of the gun have never been realised by the military authorities. If

they have seen the gun and tried it, know all about it, and are determined that, notwithstanding its advantages, the loss which might accrue by changing the gun at this period of the war would be greater than the advantage which would be gained, then I, for one, have nothing more to say. It is for them to decide. But I do not think it is right that, in the face of so much expert opinion in favour of this gun, it should be, in the common colloquial phrase, »turned down« without having been properly inspected and properly tested by those who sit in judgment upon it.

After all, we have in this war a history of failures of imagination on the part of the military authorities; of failures to realise the enormous importance of making improvements in the supply of munitions in proper time. The very heart of the whole question of the deficiency in the supply of munitions in the first year of the war was altogether a failure of imagination on the part of the military authorities to realise what the necessities of the war were, and to what the lack of munitions was going to amount. They were told by the highest authority over and over again, but they would not believe it.

Then if you go from the general to the particular, we all know the history of the Stokes gun. We know that this gun was offered to the War Office—I forget the exact time, but I think a year and a-half before it was accepted. »Turned down. Don't want it. We shall lose more than we gain by making a change«—all the arguments were used which the noble Lord has addressed to us to-night. »The war is coming to an end; it will be over in about six months; it is not worth while.« And then finally it was found that the Stokes gun was an admirable thing, and that there was nothing to be said against it. It was made in hundreds of thousands, and has been used ever since; but the authorities lost about a year and a-half before they realised what the value of the Stokes gun was and what it meant to the troops in the field.

I do not say that this present case is going to be a repetition of that; but let us be sure that the military authorities

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weigh the issue fully and properly before they decide. Let them make no mistake about it. This Madsen gun is the best machine-gun. Do not let them tell us that the war is going to come to an end pretty soon; they do not know it, and it certainly does not look like it. Do not let them think that opportunities which are lost will recur. They do not recur. Other people may take the gun and we may not have it at all. Do not let them believe that a thing can be safely turned down without trying it. It must be tried. Therefore, without attempting for a moment to ask your Lordships to force upon the Government, or upon the War Office, or upon the military authorities, a military weapon of which they do not for one reason or another approve, I earnestly hope that the closing words of the noble Lord's speech will be pregnant with future meaning. He said that the military authorities were about to reconsider carefully the whole question. That is a very hopeful sign; and I trust that the result of the reconsideration will be that this gun will be thoroughly tested, and, if it tested, I venture to prophesy that it will be adopted.

The Earl of STAIR: My Lords, I want to say a few words on two of the objections to which Lord Elphinstone drew attention with regard to adopting this gun. He said that it was an added difficulty to train men to another new weapon. At the present moment I am responsible for seeing that a certain number of men are trained in the Lewis gun, and also for training a good many recruits. From what I have seen of the Madsen gun, I feel convinced that you could teach the men who are being trained now in the Lewis gun all that it is necessary for them to know in order to use the Madsen gun without adding even one day to the training they are giving now in the Lewis gun. Another of Lord Elphinstone's objections was that if we turned on men to start a new factory in this country for the Madsen gun it would reduce our present production of manpower. I take it that at the very outside the number of men required for a new factory of an age fit to bear arms would be possibly 1,000. Supposing it takes six months to produce

1,000 Madsen guns with the new factory, I think the exchange is at the least in our favour. In six months you could not make those 1,000 civilians into soldiers; at any rate into only a very inferior article, in my opinion; and if you could turn on those civilians to making 1,000 Madsen guns you would arm a good many of our present Divisions in a way in which they are certainly not armed at the present time, and with a weapon which I am convinced, if we had had it only in small numbers at the beginning of the war, would have put an entirely different complexion on the whole thing.

Lord SALTOUN: My Lords, I hardly like to intervene, but I am a very old soldier, I am sorry to say. There are one or two things, however, that fell from the noble Lord who answered the Questions which seem to me to require something more explicit. I do not think that he understood the matter. He did not give much hope that the gun would be accepted; yet there is no doubt that this Madsen gun is the best quick-firing gun. Surely it is the duty of the Government to equip the men in the field with the best possible weapon and not to be affected by any expence or trouble to which it may put the country. There was one other thing to which the noble Lord drew attention, and that was the drawback of having different weapons with different ammunition, but this weapon uses the same ammunition as the Lewis gun, and the result would be that you would only be adding another weapon. You would do that gradually and so strengthen the arms we have, and not in any way reduce them.

Earl BRASSEY: My Lords, I have had the privilege, like my noble and gallant friend who moved this Resolution, of seeing this gun. I cannot pretend to be a machine-gun expert, but I commanded a Yeomanry regiment for some years before the war and have done so for two and a-half years since the war, and I share the opinion of the noble Lord that this gun is infinitely superior for certain purposes to any other machine-gun. In my opinion it will be a national disaster if it is not at once adopted by this coun-

try. If it goes to our enemies the consequences will follow to which Lord Beresford alluded.

The Duke of SOMERSET: My Lords, I merely rise to back the opinion of my noble friend Lord Beresford. I had an opportunity of seeing this gun thoroughly explained yesterday, and I also saw the Lewis gun, and I think nobody can see the two without noticing at once the extraordinary improvement which the Madsen gun is on the Lewis gun. I will quote what a New Zealand officer said to me. When I remarked yesterday, »How anybody can be so mad as not to take up this gun when they can get it instead of the Lewis gun, I cannot understand,« he replied »All I can say is that it amounts to a crime, not to a mistake.«

Lord PENRHYN: My Lords, there was one point with regard to what Lord Elphinstone said to which I should rather like to take exception, and that was as to the weight of the spare barrel, which I think we were told was 5 lbs. We have always to remember that although the spare barrel of the Madsen gun may weigh 5 lbs. it takes only fifteen seconds to replace the heated barrel by the cool spare barrel, whereas the Lewis gun is for at least twenty minutes out of action, which makes a very great difference. There is also a point which I do not think has had quite sufficient stress laid upon it, and it is this. I am informed that the Germans know perfectly well when our Lewis guns are out of action, and that their rushes in waves are to a very considerable extent timed to meet the occasions when our Lewis guns happen to be out of action. With the Madsen gun you could change the barrel in fifteen seconds and go straight away.

Lord HENEAGE: My Lords, there is one point that has not been answered, and that is as to the danger of the enemy getting this gun whilst the War Office are considering whether or not they will have it, because it is of very little use the War Office coming to the conclusion six months hence that this is the best gun which can be had if in the meantime the

Germans have got it by thousands in the field.

The Earl of ALBEMARLE: My Lords, I should like to mention one matter which was not referred to by my noble and gallant friend. Yesterday I saw a demonstration of this gun with Cavalry, and the demonstration ended with a competition between the Hotchkiss gun and the Madsen gun mounted on Cavalry horses. At a given signal the guns commenced to be brought into action. From the time the signal was given I noticed that the Madsen gun got into action in fifteen seconds. The Hotchkiss gun and its personnel and equipment were not dismounted and had not begun to fire—I think I am quite correct in saying—until the Madsen gun had fired something like 100 rounds. I think it was more, but I am certain that it was 100 rounds before the Hotchkiss gun commenced to fire. This proves the celerity with which this gun can be brought into action.

Lord BERESFORD: My Lords, I must say I agree with my noble friend Lord Salisbury that when Lord Elphinstone began his speech I thought we were going to have the old stereotyped form of Government reply which is so heartbreaking to those who want reforms. At the end of his speech, however, he was certainly more encouraging. I do not want to divide the House, and if my noble friend Lord Elphinstone will assure me that the authorities who dictate as to whether this gun is to be issued to the Army or not will go and see a trial—such trials as I have seen—and if he will assure me that a gun of the latest pattern will be sent to Headquarters in France to get a real opinion, then I will not divide the House. Otherwise I shall do so. Those are two questions to which I want a definite reply.

I also want an answer to the point raised by Lord Heneage, as to what is going to happen to us if the enemy get this new gun, because I am informed that they are after it. They have got the old pattern. Therefore I say let us get the gun somehow or other, even if we are not going to use it. There are one or two other questions. The noble Lord said there had been no adverse criticism of the Le-

wis gun. I think he is making a mistake. There have been many adverse criticisms on its continual jamming, and letters have been written by men who worked the gun pointing out certain improvements which they think should be made to stop the jamming which is so fatal. Lord Penrhyn is quite right when he says that the Germans know about the jamming and heating, and so time their attacks. Then Lord Stair pointed out about the training. Lord Elphinstone said that training would be difficult, but with this gun training would be nothing. Training in taking to pieces and assembling a Lewis gun takes days and days, but men can learn this gun in a few hours. They can learn to take to pieces and assemble the Madsen gun in a few hours.

Then my noble friend spoke about a year—»it may be a year.« Suppose it does take a year! But it will not take anything like a year if the thing is fairly tackled and certain industrials are used at once. Does he suppose the war is going to be over in a year? How do we know when the war is going to be over? This war cannot be over until the American nation comes in effective force with 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 men in the trenches, and they cannot be there until October of next year. That is my opinion. I hope I am wrong. At any rate, we do not know when the war is going to be over, and we must give our men the best weapon as soon as ever we can in order to end the war.

I agree with the military authorities that to increase the types of weapon is a very serious thing, but it is not so serious when they all use the same ammunition. The difficulty about increasing types of weapons in my early days was that it always meant new ammunition, and that is a most difficult question. Of course nobody in this House, least of all an old Service man, wants to dictate to the military authorities. The military authorities must be the judges. They must be the people who decide. All I ask is that the military authorities should go and see the gun tried. Not one of them has seen it tried. As I said, they have seen it in a room. That is like seeing the model of a ship in a room. If you want to know anything about the ship you must go to the

ship and see what she is like at sea. The same thing applies to the machine-gun. I hope my friend will assure me that the military authorities are going to the trial. That is what I want to know.

The last point I raise is this. Will the Government send to G.H.Q. in France one of these guns with people who understand the gun, and have fired it in the trial, and then let the Commander-in-Chief make a report about the gun? Though I appreciate the difficulties of the Government, I am satisfied that considering the advantages of utility, of ending the war, and of giving our men the very best weapon that can be manufactured—my noble friend spoke of another gun; I know the other gun which he thinks is going to be improved; it is a good gun, but it is not nearly so good as the Madsen—I am satisfied, I say, that the report of the Commander-in-Chief will be of such a character that all the difficulties which now face the Government would be surmounted. I would guarantee that if the matter were faced properly you would get certain numbers of the gun into the ranks in six months, not a year. That is my opinion. And remember that every gun—we ought to call it a rifle—every machine-rifle given to a man means the equivalent of the fire of quite half a battalion. In all the circumstances I hope that my noble friend will answer the questions I have put to him. I do not wish to divide your Lordships' House, but I want these two things carried out in the direction I have indicated.

Lord ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, I rise only for one brief moment because I think the noble and gallant Lord, possibly unwittingly, has given, in his references to a year, rather an unfair interpretation of one of the remarks I made. Just now I understood him to say that I had practically inferred that the war was not going on for a year. I never suggested anything of the kind.

Lord BERESFORD: No, I did not.

Lord ELPHINSTONE: The only time I mentioned a year was when I said that very optimistic estimates had been made as to the length of time required. Some

said three months, and I said that, in the opinion of the Ministry of Munitions, it was much more likely to be a year before there was any sensible output.

Lord BERESFORD: I am very sorry; I meant to say that.

Lord ELPHINSTONE: As to the other point, he criticised the question of training, which was also commented on by Lord Stair. I did not rack my brains to find this as a reason. This is one of the reasons given to me by the military authorities at the War Office. I merely informed your Lordships of it.

Lord BERESFORD: Hear, Hear.

The Lord PRIVY SEAL (The Earl of Crawford): My Lords, I should be sorry if the noble and gallant Admiral thought it necessary to divide on a Motion which he has not put on the Paper. From the general point of view of procedure, I think that is a little undesirable. The Notice he has read to us to-night is in different terms from that of which he was good enough to give my noble friend private notice. But I think it is probably quite possible to meet the cases he has put forward. Substantially he asks for two things, and I think I am in a position to satisfy him on each. The Army Council agrees that experts, their experts, shall investigate this gun fully—fully. That meets the noble Lord's plea on the first point.

Lord BERESFORD: That means trials.

The Earl of CRAWFORD: You cannot investigate without trials.

Lord BURNHAM: And immediately?

The Earl of CRAWFORD: I will add »and immediately« if the noble Lord thinks that necessary. I am sorry he should think it necessary. Secondly, the military authorities in France shall give an opportunity—shall I add an »immediate« opportunity?—of examining the gun on the spot.

Viscount GALWAY: My Lords, the noble Earl did not take any notice of the que-

stion put by Lord Heneage, who suggested that steps should be taken to see that the gun does not get into the hands of the enemy, owing to the long time taken for consideration of the matter by the War Office and the Ministry of Munitions. I think some answer should be given.

The Earl of CRAWFORD: There has been no delay at the Ministry of Munitions, which ordered these guns three years ago. In answer to Lord Heneage, I have no doubt that the Army authorities will take due note of his point. Personally, of course, it is impossible for me to say what is done in such a matter, but I have not a doubt they will take note of the word of caution.

Lord HENEAGE: My Lords, the point is that there is a danger of the Germans securing the newest type of this gun. They have already managed to get the original type, and it is stated on pretty good authority that they are manoeuvring to get the newest pattern of the gun. What steps are the War Office going to

take, or can they take—I want to put it fairly—to prevent the danger of the Germans acquiring the gun instead of us?

The Earl of CRAWFORD: It is quite irregular for me to address your Lordships again, but I think it must be fairly obvious, even were I in a position to answer that question, that it would be perfectly impossible to make a public statement on the subject.

Lord BERESFORD: I have to thank my noble friend Lord Crawford for his courtesy. I am quite satisfied with what he said. But I would like to add this. It is very material for these trials that a representative of the Madsen firm should be with the gun. Can the noble Earl assure me of that?

The Earl of CRAWFORD: Certainly.

Lord BERESFORD: I ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

