

*War Appropriation Bill*

withstanding the character of the management, had failed to arrive at its objective, and that these companies were being held up not only in the procurement of parts, but with regard to a multiplicity of things including supplies, materials and parts which Federal Aircraft was to have supplied to them.

But the biggest hurdle which had not been overcome was that of engineering data. I am told that the procuring of engineering data for planes was a very important part of the operations of Federal Aircraft, that there were more than twenty thousand blue-prints for one of these engines, and that there was great delay. I have some evidence that such is the case.

That may be excusable. As the minister has said, this was a new, mushroom enterprise in Canada. I refer to the construction of aircraft, and this type of aircraft particularly. It may have been excusable. But the delays were there, and these men were held back in the production of Avro-Anson aircraft. We were not told very fully to-day just what the causes of the delays were. It may be that personnel was not available—I do not know. That was what I was asking the minister to give to the House of Commons to-day—a factual, true statement of the whole position. That is what I asked for.

Is that an offence? Has the day arrived in Canada when a member of this house cannot rise in his place and ask the minister for information? If so, then of course we have reached the fascist state. But from the partial revelation made by the minister this afternoon, I find the government is not adhering to that policy to which it has heretofore adhered with regard to the question of production in terms of units.

Mr. HOWE: What is that?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): In respect of aircraft production the government has departed from the strictly rigid policy which has obtained heretofore of not giving to the house and to the country statements of production in terms of units. We have been deluged with statements of production in terms of dollars and cents which to the layman, I suggest, do not mean anything but taxes.

Mr. HOWE: I may say that I am quite willing to give figures for anything produced for Canada which is not on the list of the things for which we have been asked to keep production figures confidential—and most of these planes are in that position. I shall be glad, if my hon. friend wishes to ask me,

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

to give the production figures per unit, per month, going back as far as he likes. I have them here.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Then this debate will have been worth while. We have not had the information. We have been consistently denied it; and one of the points upon which I have dwelt on more than one occasion in this chamber has been the fear of the government to tell us what they are doing with our money.

Mr. HOWE: I never have been asked for detailed figures on the production of planes.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Not for the production of planes, but I have asked for a statement, generally.

Mr. HOWE: I have said—

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I will sit down.

Mr. HOWE: Time and again we have received cabled requests from the foreign office not to give production figures on a great many items. Our own forces also do not like this information to be given out. Since, however, the training programme is well under way, there is no great secret about it, and I shall be glad to give production figures for the training programme.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Now we are making a little progress. If the ministry cannot give all the details of the production in terms of units because of the request of the British government I will be the last man to ask for it; but they do it in Australia.

Mr. HOWE: Maybe so; they are not producing very much.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Well, that is a matter of opinion. I suggest they are a little bit ahead in aircraft production.

Mr. HOWE: Oh, no.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I would think so.

Mr. HOWE: They are over here trying to buy some planes from us.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is a matter of opinion, of course. Now I am trying to get a further statement, brought right down to date, about production in Australia.

Mr. HOWE: Get the number of units.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I will, if they will give it to me. It has been cabled for; I think it will be obtained, and I shall be glad to table it in the house.

Mr. HOWE: Let me see it when it comes.