

*War Appropriation Bill*

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That was just a plane assembled here, was it not?

Mr. HOWE: There were certain English components in it; it was part English and part Canadian. The flight was made to try out certain components, particularly the Jacobs engine and the Canadian propeller. The flight was eminently satisfactory, and we have no doubt that this programme will pull itself together and that we will get aeroplanes about according to our expectations of last November.

We should place responsibility where responsibility is due. At various stages of our experience with aircraft we thought we knew the demand and made our plans accordingly. When the air training agreement was entered into in December, 1939, we thought we knew the requirements of Canadian production in connection with that programme, and we proceeded to contract for them. In June we had new obligations placed upon us, and we thought we understood the extent of those new obligations. We thought then we had the schedule under which the various schools would open, and we thought we knew when planes would be required from this department. Well, as hon. gentlemen know, due to the energetic prosecution of that plan by my colleague the Minister of National Defence for Air the programme has been greatly speeded up; new schools have been brought into operation six months ahead of schedule. This has meant, of course, that they require planes six months sooner than we had expected, and I may admit that we have had our troubles in keeping up with that advanced schedule. We have never complained. I hope I shall always be the last to attempt to slow down any of my colleagues in getting on with this war. I never say it cannot be done; I always say, "We will give it a try," and that was what I said to my colleague when he consulted me about speeding up his scheme. I said, "We will do our best. I do not think it will be too bad. We may not give you all the planes, but I think we can keep you going," and I think we have done that up to this time.

A short time ago the minister for air said he was on the ragged edge for twin engine trainers. So he is, but it will not be long until we will have Canadian production in ample volume, so that will be a temporary condition. I suppose for the next three or four months he will be rather short of twin engine trainers. I do not think he will ever be very short of single engine trainers, and if it is necessary to do so it is not a serious matter temporarily to change over some of the schools from twin engine trainers to single engine trainers. Nevertheless, that condition

[Mr. Howe.]

exists. I am the first to admit it, but I should like hon. members to be fair enough to see that the problem has changed from time to time, as war problems always do and always will. War is an abnormal condition; the tide of war changes from day to day, and our service ministers must take that into account.

There we have the Anson programme as it stands to-day. I think that is a reasonably complete statement on it. At a later stage in the committee I shall be glad to answer any specific questions. I wonder if, in the light of what I have said, my hon. friend will say that his press release is a fair statement of the position? This is an extraordinary statement which appeared in the *Montreal Star* and which I understand is a reprint of the press release of the leader of the opposition (Mr. Hanson). I do not know on just what date it appeared, but it was the day following the statement in the house. The report reads:

At the request of the minister on or about the 7th of January the manufacturers submitted to the acting minister an unanimous recommendation as to what should be done. I have not been able to get a copy of this report, but I understand it urged:

The four recommendations are then set out. Then the exact wording of the letter is quoted. This indicates that my hon. friend did not prepare this statement himself.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): There is no quotation of my remark.

Mr. HOWE: It urged:

1. That Federal Aircraft, Limited, be dissolved;
2. That de Havilland Aircraft of Canada be asked to manage or administer, for the Department of Munitions and Supply, the Avro-Anson project, taking over the personnel, materials, records, etc., of Federal Aircraft;
3. That de Havilland Aircraft assume responsibility for engineering and procurement of materials;
4. That the Department of Munitions and Supply take over the contractual and financial obligations and the financial functions of Federal Aircraft.

Let me read the letter to see if my hon. friend sees any difference.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I believe the minister wants to be fair. I do not see any sign that I was quoting from an original copy, and I did not do it. What I said was this:

At the request of the minister, on or about the 7th of January, the manufacturers submitted to the acting minister an unanimous recommendation as to what should be done. I have not been able to get a copy of this report, but I understand that it urged:

I then epitomized them.