

facturers of this country. Surely the time has come when the house should be taken into the confidence of the government. In view of the feeling which prevails across the country with regard to Federal Aircraft, one of the first things to which this house was entitled was a statement from the Minister of Munitions and Supply or the Minister of National Defence for Air explaining fully what was wrong with the aircraft production of this country and showing how plans had been made to see that the production promised by the minister was accomplished.

Yesterday the people of Canada had the opportunity of listening to Lord Beaverbrook. His was a speech that inspired every one who heard it, but it was a speech which placed upon us certain responsibilities and which showed us where our responsibility lay. He referred to the northwest passage and mentioned the danger that lay in that direction. He spoke of the protection of these islands and what was needed. He referred to the ships that were required in order to replace the tonnage that had been and would be lost. In other words, he referred to the submarine warfare.

In November of last year this government gave a contract to the Midland shipbuilding yards for the building of submarine chasers. What happened? A certain type of hardwood timber was needed for the bottoms of those submarine chasers. I do not know whether this was a cost-plus contract, but from the manœuvring that has been going on I would say that it is. The contract for those timbers was given to a dealer in Toronto, but not a man who owned a mill. They did not go to the big sawmills of this country, or even to the small sawmills, to obtain the timber; they went to this dealer in Toronto. That dealer went to another dealer to get the timbers. That dealer in turn went to a man in my riding who was a milk peddler two years ago. He was asked to produce the timbers so he went out and bought a hardwood bush and hauled the logs into Preston, my own home town, and had them sawn into timbers to be used in building the submarine chasers in Midland. Half the logs were too small and would not produce timber of a sufficient size, so it was rejected. If my information is correct, and I have no reason to doubt it, they still have not sufficient timber to lay the first submarine chaser frame in Midland. If there is no supervision of these contracts, and if they are cost-plus contracts, then I can understand how such things can happen.

To-day the Minister of Finance (Mr. Ilsley) told us how the people had responded to the war savings certificates campaign. I can tell

[Mr. Homuth.]

the house how pleased we were in the riding of Waterloo South at the response which has been made. In that riding the people bettered their quota. They subscribed to this campaign because they are anxious to do something to help win this war. They feel that this is the one way in which they can help. While the minister is appealing to the people of Canada to pull in their belts, to save their money and to do without many of the things which they have been doing without for years and which they thought they might have an opportunity of having, a contract like this is let.

The thing is passed from pillar to post. Do hon. members think the first dealer was going to carry out his part for nothing? Do hon. members think the second dealer was going to act for nothing? Do hon. members think the third dealer was going to work for nothing? One of the main troubles in the whole set-up of our war effort is the fact that so many of these contracts have been sublet and profits have accrued to those who sublet contracts without their being earned.

We are in this war. We members of the opposition are just as enthusiastic as any other members of this house or as any other group of men or women in this country. We are willing to help this government. We want to do everything we possibly can to help the government in their war effort. But we ask them to be frank with us. We ask them to be honest with us. We ask them to be big enough to admit their mistakes and to show us that they are rectifying them. If they will do that, they need have no fear at all as to the response the people of Canada will make.

The people of Canada can take it. They have taken it before. There are not many homes in this country which did not suffer as a result of the last war. Before this war is over, there will be very few homes which will not have loved ones in the fight. We are all in it as far as we can go. If we cannot have a national government, if we are going to continue to have a Liberal government, let us at least have a fighting government that will make an all-out effort to carry our cause to victory. We are willing to cooperate with the government and to play the game, but we do ask the government to be honest with us and tell us frankly the things they should have told us a long time ago.

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Munitions and Supply): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to take part in this debate, and I wish to say at once that a debate on external affairs is not an appropriate occasion to raise the matters referred to by the last speaker (Mr. Homuth).