

War Appropriation Bill

manoeuvres; I would be sitting there and he here. And I am paying him a high compliment indirectly.

Mr. POULIOT: The word "innocence" has several meanings.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I went on to say:

Federal Aircraft Limited was set up by the minister as a government-owned corporation to coordinate the construction of Avro-Anson planes—

That may not be the full statement of its set-up but it was one of the primary reasons for setting up the corporation, as the minister's statement to-day will bear out.

—and it assumed certain important functions with respect to procurement and later the manufacture of certain essential parts involving an expenditure of \$50,000,000.

That has not been disputed and I am assuming that the minister is in agreement. He nods his head.

But for some reason or other unknown to the public, the efforts of this corporation have not produced results.

The minister's statement to-day bears out that general statement.

Mr. HOWE: It has produced all the results expected at this stage.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): There is a difference of opinion.

Mr. HOWE: They have not produced aeroplanes but they have produced results.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I may have one opinion and the minister another, and maybe his is better than mine. It ought to be, because he is assumed, of course, to have more knowledge than I could possibly have with regard to this matter. I will tell him this, however, that the statements which have appeared in public are based on statements made by the manufacturers themselves, and I understand they are prepared to stand by every word they said.

Mr. HOWE: That is not what they tell me.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am told one story, the minister tells another, and the newspapers another, but that is the information I have. Before I get through I intend to make some further observations with regard to that. Just now I am dealing with my own statement.

I am advised that around the end of the year, the acting Minister of Munitions and Supply—

The Minister of National Defence for Naval Affairs (Mr. Macdonald) was getting his feet under the table, I suppose, in the absence of the minister, and learning something about

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

the operations of a huge department, which must have been an overpowering job for any new man to undertake.

—requested an opportunity to discuss aeroplane production problems with manufacturers interested in Anson bombers—

Is that true? I believe it is. I have never heard it denied. The minister is here and he will say whether that statement is true or false. I have no doubt it is true. The minister remains silent, and therefore—

Mr. MACDONALD (Kingston City): What is the question?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I asked whether early in the year he did not request an opportunity to discuss aeroplane production problems with manufacturers interested in Anson bombers.

Mr. MACDONALD (Kingston City): In answer to my hon. friend's question, there was a discussion between the manufacturers of component parts of Avro-Anson bombers, on the one hand, and myself on the other. Whether I requested it or they requested it I am not sure. They came to Ottawa and requested to see me and I spent an hour or two with them.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The substance of what I say is correct. I am not concerned whether they came to the minister or the minister went to them. Whatever the *modus operandi* may have been, the minister met them.

Mr. MACDONALD (Kingston City): Quite so.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Yes, and they discussed aeroplane production problems at first hand over the plight of the Avro-Anson programme. My information is that this was the subject matter of the discussion and that the minister:

... requested the manufacturers to give him their specific suggestions as to how this situation, which was the responsibility of Federal Aircraft Limited, might be remedied.

That, I assume, is true. No sabotage about that; nothing improper in the statement with regard to that.

Mr. HOWE: I was not accusing my hon. friend of sabotage.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I thought the minister came near it. If he did not mean it, then he shivered on the edge of it.

Mr. HOWE: I said that MacMillan said that he was being sabotaged, and I said I shared that opinion, believing that the way in which his name was being used was a form of sabotage.