

producing ahead of schedule. I disputed that statement; I dispute it now; I am not going into the details now, but I dispute it. I dispute it because of evidence that certain members of the government who acted as counsel for the government before the public accounts committee tried to bring out before that committee. But what I am getting at is that while we were discussing this question and questions were being asked of this government, at the same time the contract was being revamped, a new contract was being made, and no member of the government, not even the Prime Minister, was frank enough with hon. members to state that they were making a new Bren gun contract.

Are we simply pawns in this game? Have we no place in this house? Have we no responsibility?

Mr. RALSTON: Will my hon. friend permit me again? I do not know where my hon. friend gets his facts; I understand that the new Bren gun contract was made in November of this year.

Mr. HOMUTH: It was made in October.

Mr. HOWE: November 29 is the date of the contract.

Mr. RALSTON: And I think this house was sitting in July.

Mr. HOMUTH: The house was sitting in November and December.

Mr. RALSTON: I was not giving my hon. friend information with regard to Bren guns.

Mr. HOMUTH: I am talking not about the minister, but about the ministers generally; one is as much to blame as another. The contract was dated October 31; I have a copy here. I am not complaining about it. Every hon. member who knows what a terrible contract the first one was, is pleased to think that a new contract was made. But when the new contract was made, the former Minister of National Defence, who was Minister of National Defence when the former contract was negotiated, made a statement to the press. This information was not given to the members of the house in spite of the fact that the Bren gun contract and Bren gun production had been mentioned many times. This contract was negotiated and signed while the house was in session.

Then the newspapers broke the story in January. After the story had broken, the former Minister of National Defence gave a statement to the papers to the effect that the old Bren gun contract had been cancelled. The present Minister of Pensions and National Health (Mr. Mackenzie), who was Minister

of National Defence at the time the old contract was negotiated, promptly issued a statement denying pointblank that the new contract was a termination of the old. On the contrary, he declared, the government was so pleased with the results of the old contract, that the new contract was a tremendous enlargement of the old arrangement.

That is not the fact. There is practically no similarity between the old contract and the new. The second clause of the new contract for Bren guns negotiated between the government of Canada and the John Inglis company provided for a price and conditions which will prove a tremendous saving to the Canadian government. Further along in the contract it is shown where all the profits accruing to the John Inglis company must be turned back to the government. The contract was different from its very inception. Instead of retaining the tremendous profits they would have earned under the old contract, the John Inglis company is now to be paid a fee for the production of Bren guns. This will mean a tremendous saving to this country.

I mention this not because I and every hon. member of this house are not pleased with the new contract; I am simply drawing attention to the lack of frankness on the part of the government. The government have refused to take the members of the opposition into their confidence. They have refused to trust us with matters that should be made public. If they would change their tactics, they would not only enhance their position, they would increase the confidence of the people of Canada in the government. I could go on to recite promise after promise which have been made by the Minister of Munitions and Supply to produce various things, and which have not been fulfilled.

What is wrong with Federal Aircraft? I do not know, and apparently the members of the government do not know. One has only to read the report of a speech delivered by the Minister of National Defence for Air (Mr. Power) before the lumbermen's convention in Montreal, where he is reported to have said:

In some training schools three advanced training planes were doing the work of four because there had been delays in the Canadian production of these planes.

"Unfortunately, I don't know why it has not been possible to produce these planes on schedule and I am not in a position to judge the delays," he said. But one exasperated officer had told him the other day: "There are some manufacturers who are either damn fools or damn liars."

Apparently he does not know, but some officer places the responsibility upon the manu-