

relating to another man who is giving his whole time to a very important matter relating to the war effort of the government. Those questions are asked by one of the Liberal members from Toronto. I do not know all the truth of the matter, but I would say this to the members of the ministry, that when you ask a man of the standing of Mr. Cottrelle to come into the service of the government, without salary, that man's reputation should be preserved and defended against attack and calumny, because he cannot answer here.

Mr. HOWE: Right.

Mr. ILSLEY: Hear, hear.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Therefore, no blame can attach to this party, at all events, in connection with attacks on the executives and others with whom the minister is surrounded. I suggest to him that to assert that there has been sabotage by any person in this part of the house is absolutely false, and I repel the suggestion if it is intended.

I am not constituting myself a defender of newspapers. Believe me, that is too big a job for me. If the minister is wise he will watch his step when he attacks the newspapers. My experience has been that no matter how just your cause may be, how strongly right may be on your side, or how pure your conscience, the newspapers will always have the last word. Therefore I think it is a work of supererogation to attack them.

Mr. ROWE: Never attack one unless you own one.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Well, I don't want to get into the newspaper business any more than the government wants to get into the business of aircraft manufacturing. I have a very wholesome respect for the newspapers—

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Because they have the last word.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): —because I have many years of experience; and I pass that philosophy on to the minister. He is, perhaps, not quite so old as I am.

Mr. HOWE: Getting on.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): He has not been in public life as long, perhaps, as I have been, but if he will take it from me, it is much better to suffer in silence than to go ahead and fight those fellows when you cannot fight on your own ground.

Now, coming down to the immediate subject matter of this debate this afternoon, it arises, I assume, quite properly out of what I thought was a harmless and innocent statement which

I was endeavouring to make in this house on February 20, at the request of the hon. member for Cumberland (Mr. Black), who was greatly disturbed over the production of Avro-Anson aeroplanes as it affected his own community. That was the basis of the statement. I should much prefer that he had done it himself, and I want to assure the committee—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): After all, I do not know why there is laughter over that. The hon. member for Cumberland is a very fine member of this house. He is an old schoolmate of mine. My association with him goes back over a period of forty-six years and there is nothing he might ask me to do, short of dishonour, which I would not attempt to do for him.

An hon. MEMBER: He would not ask you to do anything dishonourable.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Of course not. On the theory that there had been a falling down in the production of Avro-Ansons especially by Canadian Car, if you will, and more particularly because it affects industry, labour and the well-being of the town of Amherst, which the hon. gentleman so ably represents in this house, and the air force of our country, I undertook to ask the government on February 20 certain questions which I based on a statement which I had reason to believe was true. And after the minister's analysis this afternoon I find that there is only one error of fact in the statement I made—only one. What was the statement I attempted to make on the afternoon of February 20, and which I was barred by the minister himself from making, and under the rules, to which I bow? After the first two paragraphs which I was allowed to read I was stopped. The request I made was for the purpose of asking the Minister of Munitions and Supply to make a public statement with respect to a matter of vital public importance, namely, the present unsatisfactory state of aircraft production in Canada, and particularly with respect to the alleged failure—"alleged" failure; that is a fair description—of the government wholly owned corporation, Federal Aircraft Limited, to function. That was the basis of my statement. I went on to say that I preferred to do it in this way rather than in another way. Perhaps I was wrong. Innocence will make mistakes.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am very innocent about the method of approach in this house. The Prime Minister laughs at that. I wish I had his astuteness in political