

*War Appropriation Bill*

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): First, will the minister be good enough to table the letters to which he referred and which he promised he would table? Secondly, I should like to say this, that if the minister had been as frank in days gone by with the Canadian public as apparently he has been to-day—and I do not at the moment at all question his frankness; for I do not know the facts—I am sure that a very large part of the newspaper campaign about which he complains might have been obviated.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to my hon. friend that the minister was in England when this campaign started—stabbing him behind his back when he was serving his country on a mission overseas.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not know when the campaign was started.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: It was started when the minister was in England. The purpose was to stab him behind his back, when he was absent from the country.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Why lecture me about it? I didn't start it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: You referred to the campaign.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Certainly I referred to the campaign. It was as a result—

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I am not lecturing my hon. friend. I am stating the facts about the campaign against the minister.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): The Prime Minister can make his speech later. If we are going to have the rules applied to one, let us have them applied to all. I was making what I thought was a mild observation, that if the minister had been as frank in days gone by, in respect to the question of production, as apparently he has been to-day—and I am not questioning his frankness to-day because I do not know whether he has told us the whole truth or not; time alone will tell; I am accepting his statement as it is—a great many of the things of which he has complained to-day might have been obviated. That is just a trite observation.

I do not intend, of course, to follow the minister with any degree of precision in the lengthy statement he has made. That would be impossible, especially for one who, like myself, has no special knowledge of the aircraft industry. That is speaking frankly. I was pleased to see that in the opening part of his remarks the minister enumerated certain spheres of production in his department which are functioning well. That ought to be true,

[Mr. Howe.]

after eighteen months of war effort. Surely by that time, after an expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars and the assembling in Ottawa of some of the best executives in the country, that ought to be true.

May I pause here to say that never at any time, at any place, in any connection have the members of this party, or myself, or anybody connected with us, thrown the slightest aspersion upon the dollar-a-year men and other high executives whom this ministry has brought to Ottawa. On the other hand, I have complimented the minister upon the character of some of the men he had brought into the department whom I knew, and in particular this very gentleman, Mr. Ralph P. Bell, whom he made the first president of Federal Aircraft Limited. I think I know him as well as the minister does, and I have been more than anxious that his reputation should not suffer through his connection with Federal Aircraft. I will not go any further than that. The minister knows that.

Mr. HOWE: Yes. The hon. member said so in the past in the house.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Yes, I certainly did, and I said privately to the minister that I was very anxious that Mr. Bell should be given a chance to do a job.

With respect to these gentlemen from one end of Canada to the other who have left their businesses and have come to Ottawa to give their time and their war effort to the government, I have taken the same position whenever an attack has been made upon them. Frankly, there has been but little attack made upon them in this house. I am glad to note that, with one or two exceptions, all confined to followers of the ministry of the day, there has not been the slightest attack on the character, the ability, or the operations of these men. My hon. friend from Essex East nods towards the far corner. I do not recall any attack having been made upon any of these gentlemen by any hon. member in that corner.

I am glad to know that neither by word, by innuendo or by any other method has there been the slightest attack made upon any of these gentlemen by any members of our party. On the contrary, I have gone out of my way to call the attention of members of the ministry, in confidence, from time to time as the occasion arose, to attacks which have been made by members supporting the government upon some of these high executives who have come in here. We had an explosion last week. We do not need to recall it. On the order paper to-day, in the name of a government member, is a series of questions