

Later our statistics branch, which is charged with the duty of looking ahead with respect to our war production so that it can advise us of possible shortages of material, labour supply and all the problems that must be envisioned to plan our course intelligently, decided that their work should be widened by the establishment of a committee to take in every department of government which had information which they thought was necessary to arrive at their conclusions. The result was that the war-time requirements board was formed in my department, with Mr. MacMillan as chairman, reporting to myself, and comprising representatives of the Bank of Canada, the Department of Finance, the Department of Labour and the three service departments. After he accepted the chairmanship Mr. MacMillan decided that he wanted to make it a full-time job; he resigned as timber controller, and has been carrying on the work of the board ever since.

There is hardly a paper published which has not stated that Mr. MacMillan said this or said that about the work of the board. With Mr. MacMillan on that board are eight or nine responsible senior civil servants. Does anyone think it improves Mr. MacMillan's relations with his fellow members on that board when this sort of thing gets into the newspapers before the board has had a chance to report or even to find out what the chairman is doing in certain directions? I think not. I think the job of sabotaging Mr. MacMillan has been fairly successfully done, but I hope he is able and big enough, and I think he is, to live it down and to continue to carry on the very useful work he is doing for this government and for Canada.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Will the minister now allow me a question?

Mr. HOWE: Yes, certainly.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Does he suggest that at any time I or any other hon. member attempted to sabotage Mr. MacMillan in any way whatsoever?

Mr. HOWE: My hon. friend in his newspaper statement said that he understands that Mr. MacMillan—at all events in the house my hon. friend used Mr. MacMillan's name.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Yes, I have, but not by the widest stretch of the imagination was there any suggestion of sabotage.

Mr. HOWE: But what is the implication? The hon. member referred to a secret report that Mr. MacMillan made as chairman of the war-time requirements board to the war committee of the cabinet and told what the

contents of the report were. Is that a reflection on Mr. MacMillan or not, that he would put in a secret report the contents of which would be on the street before we had seen it? I would say that that constitutes a reflection on Mr. MacMillan.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not think so for a minute. Perhaps it is a reflection on somebody else.

Mr. HOWE: The newspapers had it.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): They had it long before I had it.

Mr. HOWE: Discussing the question of sabotage, there have been vicious editorials in the papers based not on fact but on hearsay, street rumours, private conversations with somebody in the government. I want to say that every reporter in Ottawa has access to my office. I am willing to hold a press conference any day that a sufficient number of newspaper men would like to meet me. I do not think the press gallery will accuse me of holding back information at press conferences so long as it was information that I could furnish without giving away secrets that were not mine. I always talk freely at press conferences and to reporters who ask me about specific problems. But there has grown up quite a feeling in the press that any rumour about the department of munitions is worthy of publication. The leader in that has been the *Financial Post*. The *Financial Post*, not satisfied with its own circulation, is now purchasing space in other newspapers to print statements which I think I have shown to-day to be absolutely false. It was the *Financial Post* that attempted to stop Bren gun manufacture in this country before the war. I have no comment to make on what the *Financial Post* prints in its own paper, but when it pays money to buy space in other newspapers, as I understand it is doing, to make untrue and damaging statements against the Department of Munitions and Supply, I think I am right in suggesting that that is not being done for philanthropy.

I make this charge, and I do it after careful consideration with a full knowledge of the facts of which I speak: the number one saboteur in Canada since the beginning of this war is the *Financial Post* of Toronto.

I have taken up a good deal of the time of the committee. I have other material here, but having spoken for about two and a half hours I think perhaps I have done my day's work. I thank hon. members for the patient hearing they have given me. Before sitting down may I say that I shall be glad to amplify any statement I have made if any hon. member would like me to do so.