

further criticism after we have seen the bill itself and have had an opportunity of examining its proposals.

Mr. CLAXTON: It is evident from the actions of the government, as well as from the speech from the throne, that the winning of the war remains the first of all objectives. It is equally clear that the second objective of the government is the institution of measures to provide full employment after the war. That point is dealt with in the speech from the throne in these words:

In the opinion of my ministers plans for the establishment of a national minimum of social security and human welfare should be advanced as rapidly as possible. Such a national minimum contemplates useful employment for all who are willing to work. . . .

It is in order to implement this statement that the resolution, and the bill which will be based upon it, are brought before the house. Several questions have been asked about the role which will be occupied by the minister in charge of the proposed department. From what the Prime Minister has said it is obvious that the minister will have to coordinate the plans of other departments. He will have to work through other agencies, if there are any other agencies; he will have to see that a particular plan is carried out by an appropriate agency, governmental or otherwise; he will have to cooperate with provincial and municipal governments, and if no other way is found to carry out a task he must be ready to do it himself. The powers which were read by the Prime Minister provide for that being done.

It should not be thought that the new department and the new minister start from scratch. As hon. members know, a great deal of work has been done in this connection by parliamentary committees, by interdepartmental committees and by the advisory committee on reconstruction and all its sub-committees, the reports of which have been tabled in the house. All that work has been done and will be available to the new minister when he is appointed. From that starting point he can go forward.

Mr. GRAYDON: Is it to be a new minister?

Mr. CLAXTON: It is to be a new minister of reconstruction, though not necessarily a new minister.

Mr. GRAYDON: That is as clear as the Prime Minister's explanation of his position.

Mr. MACDONALD (Kingston City): An old minister with a new name.

Mr. CLAXTON: The leader of the opposition knows very well that we are debating a resolution preceding the introduction of a bill

[Mr. Graydon.]

to set up a new department, over which there will be a new minister who will be the first minister of reconstruction. That should be clear enough for him.

In conclusion, may I say that during the war the people of Canada have become conscious of their resources to a degree they have never known before. We now see something of what the people of Canada can do. We have seen an enormous increase in our industrial capacity and in the skills of our people; and I think most Canadians have faith that these resources and skills can be put to use after the war is over. Useful jobs can be provided for all Canadians willing to work, and that will be the object of this new department.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I should like to express my appreciation of the attitude of hon. members toward the resolution which is before the committee, and to thank them for the support they have given the principle of the establishment of a new department of government specially concerned with reconstruction. My old friend the hon. member for Davenport has asked me to answer one or two questions. I think they help to elucidate the significance of the work of the minister of the department of reconstruction. The hon. member asked whether the department would be concerned with seeking to have new industries developed in Canada, with furthering the possible development of the St. Lawrence waterway, with the matter of irrigation in the west, and projects of the kind. These questions serve to illustrate exactly what I have said, that all matters which relate to the development of resources, of industry and the like will be part of the work of reconstruction. It will be a part of the duty of the minister of reconstruction to seek to gather from his colleagues of the other departments information as to the projects which they feel should be developed in the interests of the country. He will bring such matters before the cabinet, together with his recommendations, after consultation with the other ministers as to whether or not they should be proceeded with. All the subjects mentioned by my hon. friend would in my opinion be among those which, at some time, would find a place somewhere in a general plan of reconstruction. Then I was asked as to the possibility of providing roads. That question illustrates another phase of the work of the minister. That is, he is not merely to be concerned with matters exclusively within the jurisdiction of the federal government but by conference with the provincial governments, and through cooperation with