

would be the means of creating work for artisans who require it at the present time.

I do not want to discuss the question just now because in committee we shall be able to go into it at greater length; but it is unfortunate that the name of an official of the government should be brought into the discussion. He is not an authority on housing; he may know something about finance, but so far as housing is concerned he knows little.

Mr. ST-PERE: Most of those witnesses there never knew anything about real estate.

Mr. HEAPS: If the hon. gentleman wishes to make a speech he can do so in his own good time. I will say this, that the witnesses who appeared there all had probably a lifetime of experience in the housing problem either in this country or in other parts of the world. In practically every country of the world, apart from Canada, governments have entered into large and comprehensive schemes of housing. We are probably the last nation in the world to tackle the problem and I should like to see the government proceed with this question and go into committee this evening, and by the time we get through I hope that something will have been done to relieve the housing situation in Canada, and in the second place to provide work for the thousands of mechanics who have had no employment for a number of years past.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): I am inclined to think that the suggestion made by the right hon. member for Argenteuil (Sir George Perley) is a good one, namely, that it might be well to see the bill before we further discuss the resolution. Much will depend on the provisions of the bill as to the extent to which it may be possible for all parties to unite on the measure. What strikes me at the outset is this. The proposed resolution is one which deals with one phase of the greatest of all problems, that of providing employment. I think I am right in assuming that providing employment is one of the specific aims of the bill. Not only is it intended to assist in providing necessary housing where something should be done to effect that end, but it is hoped it will help to provide employment in a manner that, so to speak, would serve two ends—that of furnishing employment to some of those in need of work and also that of furnishing accommodation for some of those in need of proper housing. What is most essential with respect to remedying unemployment and providing employment—and I have said so from the beginning of this parliament—is

that there should be, not a number of different commissions dealing with different schemes but one national commission charged with the supervision of all state effort towards the relief of unemployment. What should be done is to establish a body which will seek to coordinate and correlate the efforts of the municipalities, the provinces and the dominion. Otherwise we shall have different public bodies spending public moneys in a manner that will lead to extravagance, waste and overlapping. If this resolution contemplates the establishment of a federal commission to go off on its own and undertake the building of houses on behalf of the federal government, I for one should be inclined to view it with a good deal of suspicion. If, on the other hand, the bill proposes to establish some body that will see to it that any federal moneys expended to provide employment may be expended in part in the construction of dwellings, where slum clearances are needed and proper accommodation for working people should be provided, and that this is done in accordance with a scheme which will correlate the efforts of the municipalities, the provinces and the dominion, then the measure may be all to the good.

Mr. HEAPS: There is something of that kind in the report.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If the bill in that respect carries out the recommendation of the report, it will serve to bring about a certain degree of unanimity in the house with respect to what it proposes. But if it is to establish another commission to enable the present administration to appoint some more officials to spend public money out of the federal treasury, without any relation to what is done by the municipalities or the provinces, then we should oppose it very strongly. However, I for one am prepared to await the introduction of the bill. I attach much importance to one word in the resolution, namely, that it is to "assist" in the construction of houses. Evidently the resolution does not contemplate the federal government going into this business as some new venture at the present time.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Morand in the chair.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: Perhaps I ought to have made some explanation of the resolution when I was moving it, but I thought that in the usual way we might go into committee at once and I could answer questions and make such explanations as might be necessary. As a matter of fact, although this resolution