

Mr. HOWE: Yes.

Mr. STIRLING: What volume of contracts is still outstanding with Munitions and Supply?

Mr. HOWE: Very few indeed. At Research Enterprises Limited we have certain contracts, mainly for the United States and the United Kingdom, for types not in production in those countries which they desire to have completed to a certain extent. Certain of those contracts will continue until next April. Beyond that there are very few contracts that are continuing. A few ships were finished to a point where it was decided to finish them. All the gun contracts I think are finished.

Mr. STIRLING: The minister referred to the United States. Are there contracts still outstanding for the allied nations, and what about the other dominions?

Mr. HOWE: The only outstanding war contracts are for the United Kingdom, mainly ships so nearly completed for United Kingdom account that the United Kingdom asked us to finish them at their expense.

Mr. JACKMAN: Do the new contracts for ships for European countries come under this department? How are they handled?

Mr. HOWE: They are placed through purchasing agencies. The French have a purchasing mission here which is placing contracts for ships for the French government.

Mr. JACKMAN: It does not go through any government department here?

Mr. HOWE: No, except that the Department of Trade and Commerce has a certain oversight of the manner in which government loans to these other countries are expended. But that does not extend to the placing of the contract or to the policing of the contract. That is a matter for the French government.

Mr. JACKMAN: Can the minister say how large the combined staffs of Munitions and Supply, and Reconstruction are at the present time, and how large he expects them to be in 1946, say at the beginning or the end of the year?

Mr. HOWE: The present strength of the Department of Munitions and Supply is about 2,500, and of Reconstruction something less than 300. The combined department by January 1 will have a strength of about 2,500, and by April 1, about 2,000.

Mr. BOUCHER: Is C.B.C. and T.C.A. under this department?

Mr. HOWE: I have nothing to do with C.B.C.

Mr. BOUCHER: Not as regards granting permits?

Mr. HOWE: That is under the Radio Act. The air services branch of the Department of Transport is under my administration by the Transfer of Duties Act put through in 1939.

Mr. CASE: The intention is that the Department of Munitions and Supply will disappear ultimately?

Mr. HOWE: Yes, it will disappear when the merger takes place. When the bill is passed the Department of Munitions and Supply will disappear into the Department of Reconstruction and Supply, which is also a temporary department. It is hoped that all the departments with which I am associated will disappear within a few years.

Mr. CASE: Wartime Housing will be under his department?

Mr. HOWE: Yes.

Mr. CASE: And T.C.A. will be transferred to the new department?

Mr. HOWE: T.C.A. is still in the Department of Transport and will continue there, although by the Transfer of Duties Act the administration of that particular branch was transferred to myself personally.

Mr. JACKMAN: The minister stated that the number of employees on the staff of Munitions and Supply was 2,500 and on the staff of Reconstruction, 300; but there are also a number of workmen engaged, for instance, in Wartime Housing. Are they not virtually on the government payroll, and are we not as taxpayers seeing that they get their weekly wage? Is the same not true of Polymer and of other crown agencies now engaged in manufacturing?

Mr. HOWE: No. The figures I gave refer to the strength of the department, not to the personnel of the crown companies.

Mr. JACKMAN: Just to the strength of the administrative staff? Can the minister say how many people are engaged and on the government payroll in addition to those who are engaged in the administrative service of these two departments?

Mr. HOWE: I think it is a little irregular to say that the employees of these companies are a burden on the taxpayers, because Polymer is bringing a handsome return to the taxpayers, and that is true of most of the crown companies, particularly Allied War Supplies. If the taxpayers had a few other businesses doing as well we would be in a very fortunate position.