

consideration could be given to it. I was in favour of taking some suitable action, and I believe my position had the support of the majority of the committee.

While I agree that the joint committee on the library of parliament may not be the proper body to carry out all the work at this stage, I believe this proposal would be a proper first step, in order that some day we may have a suitable national library in Canada.

Mr. CHURCH: May I ask the minister if he has any proposed plan?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): We have no plan for a building, no.

Mr. CHURCH: It is more important than national parks.

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): In reply to the observations of the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), I would say that if the committee meets and decides that a special committee should be appointed, it will be in a position so to recommend in its report. I had thought they would possibly do that; I had not considered that they would themselves undertake to draw up a program.

Mr. CHURCH: That will bury it for this session.

Mr. GRAYDON: Does the government intend to present to this committee when it meets any considered policy of its own?

Mr. GIBSON (Hamilton West): The resolution before the house is that the committee shall consider the resolutions and proposals, and any other proposals which may be brought in, and that it shall then make its recommendations in its report to the house.

Mr. GRAYDON: I take it that the proposals which from year to year have been made from this side of the house will be considered too.

Motion agreed to.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

ATLANTIC COAST—UNITED STATES BASES IN NEWFOUNDLAND

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. H. DICKEY (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, in view of the importance to the constituency of Halifax of defence and allied matters along the Atlantic coast, I should like to ask a question of the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent). If the decision of the people of Newfoundland is for confederation with Canada, and if that decision is carried out, will it affect in any way the ownership of defence bases in Newfoundland territory which

are now occupied by United States forces, or will Canada acquire any interest in such bases?

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): My information is that United States bases in Newfoundland are held under 99-year leases as from 1941, under treaties between the United States and the United Kingdom. Any change of tenure, in the event of union of Newfoundland with Canada, would of course require new treaty arrangements with the United States government.

NATIONAL HOUSING

AMENDMENT WITH RESPECT TO POWERS OF APPROVED LENDING INSTITUTIONS, ETC.

The house resumed from Wednesday, May 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Howe for the second reading of Bill No. 280, to amend the National Housing Act, 1944, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Nicholson.

Mr. J. H. HARRIS (Danforth): Mr. Speaker, last night when the house adjourned at six o'clock I had hoped I might have concluded my few remarks. It so happened, however, that at the adjournment hour I had been referring to New Zealand and Australia. I had in mind the fact that I had read many references as to how these socialistic members of the commonwealth had dealt with their housing problems. From my own observations of a few short years ago I am prompted to say that their problem is not solved. The problem there is just as intense as it is here. It may be that they have on their statute books legislation which will help them solve their housing problem more quickly than it can be solved here. Their geographical position gives them some advantage in that they do not know what it means to live under circumstances such as those described yesterday by the hon. member for Brandon (Mr. Matthews), where sometimes temperatures drop to as much as thirty degrees below zero. They do not have to prepare for winter to the same extent that we do in this country, nor do they encounter many of our difficulties.

Mention has been made of building priorities of one kind or another. I would ask the minister to correct me if I am wrong in the statement that we have priorities in connection with the acquisition of nearly everything we require in the building of houses, whereas in New Zealand those priorities are applied to the extent of only fifty per cent.

I realize that in some respects we must be even more drastic than we are today in the diversion of building supplies to enterprises