

I am quite prepared to discuss it to-night except that it brings us definitely into the field of reconstruction. If it could be understood that we shall regard Research Enterprises as a special case and defer discussion of the same types of problem until the Department of Reconstruction is reached, that would solve the situation. If that is satisfactory we could make an exception in the case of Research Enterprises, since it is a sort of borderline case.

Mr. FLEMING: I am agreeable to allowing it to stand until we come to it in the regular way. I do not want to take it up out of its turn.

Mr. HOWE: Having permitted a rather long discussion on Research Enterprises, I think in fairness we should finish it up to-night, but I should not like it to be a precedent.

Mr. MacINNIS: I believe the question was raised by the hon. member for Winnipeg North, and I think the statement was made that this would be taken up when we were discussing the Department of Reconstruction. I notice the hon. member is not in his seat at the moment, and if we go ahead with the discussion he may miss it owing to a misunderstanding.

Mr. HOWE: I would prefer to deal with this matter when we can discuss a similar series. The future use of war plants is a rather broad subject. If my hon. friend is willing to allow Research Enterprises to stand over until we come to reconstruction, when we can discuss the future of any plants that have been turned over to peace-time use, perhaps that would be best.

Mr. FLEMING: I am quite agreeable to that.

The CHAIRMAN: It is understood by all hon. members of the committee that dominion enterprises which will come under the new Department of Reconstruction will be left over for future discussion.

Mr. McLURE: The minister read a list of cities in which this housing plan is to be operated and he covered every province except Prince Edward Island. I should like to know if the municipalities in that province have made any further requests to those which were made in person by the mayors and city clerks who were here a week ago to interview him in his office, or has it been neglect of our province on the part of the administration?

[Mr. Howe.]

Mr. HOWE: An application for wartime housing must be more than a request; it must be a formal application by a city council passed officially, and it must carry with it an undertaking to provide the lots on which the houses are to be built and to meet the terms required under the Wartime Housing agreement which imposes certain obligations on the municipality. We have never had a formal application from any municipality in the province mentioned by my hon. friend. When such application is received we shall be able to consider it, but I suggest that the reason we have not received one is that housing is not very badly needed there.

The CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that we are to take up the items? A number of questions that have been asked could properly be taken up under the items. For instance, the last question referred to housing, which is item 3, and earlier questions on departmental administration would definitely come under that item. Shall we start to take up the estimates item by item? It was suggested that we take up departmental administration. Is there any objection to that?

Mr. MACDONNELL: I just want to have this clear. As I understand it, the companies whose operations are to be continued will come under the Department of Reconstruction, and I understand also that the discussion of War Assets will come under reconstruction.

Mr. HOWE: That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: Shall we start with departmental administration? I believe the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario had asked certain questions.

Departmental administration, \$7,000,000.

Mr. HOWE: The hon. member asked the strength of Munitions and Supply as of November 1, 1944; the answer is 4,500. As of November 1, 1945, the figure is 2,500. The strength of the Department of Reconstruction—as the two departments are to be amalgamated, this is quite interesting—as of November 1, 1945, was 300; it is estimated that as of January 1, 1946, it will be 350.

After the amalgamation of the departments, which we hope will be accomplished before the present month ends, we expect that the combined strength will be approximately 2,500 by the first of the year, dropping to 2,000 by April 1, 1946. I might point out that while the work of placing and supervising contracts has almost stopped, the work of settling contracts is greatly augmented. My fear is, not