

*Supply—Resources and Development*

the dominion government. In the period of reconstruction that will follow the arrangements that are made to deal with this situation, it will be necessary to have regard to the international aspect of this whole question, and it will be necessary for the dominion government to bring into operation the machinery of the international joint commission, and also to take care that on the Canadian side of the border whatever is done is done in conformity with the international arrangements.

Furthermore, it will be necessary for the Canadian government to take such steps as are appropriate to persuade the federal government of the United States, and through them the state governments concerned, that certain things should be done if an examination should determine that there are things to be done on the other side of the international boundary.

I submit that with all these direct interests and responsibilities of the dominion government involved it is essential that there be some general authority which can bring together dominion agencies concerned, whether they be departments of government or agencies of government, and also the provincial government within its own field and others who are concerned with this work.

May I emphasize again that in setting up any such authority I would be very insistent that there should be no attempt in any way to invade the field of provincial jurisdiction under the British North America Act. However, that is not necessary because if this agency is created it can bring the provincial and municipal authorities into a joint plan which would make it possible to deal with the whole broad question without always being uncertain as to how the various rights of the dominion government were to be dealt with when they arose in these areas.

As the minister knows from having seen this area personally, it is going to be a heart-breaking experience for many thousands of people. The exodus of people from the city of Winnipeg, involving some 110,000, is the largest movement of people out of any city in our history. We probably would never have expected that even in war it would have been necessary to contemplate the movement of people out of any city in such numbers as that. That movement, made necessary by the threat which was so gallantly met by the people of Winnipeg and of the surrounding country, has of course imposed tremendous financial obligations on all the people who are affected; and those financial obligations are

[Mr. Drew.]

going to be very severe, quite apart from the personal losses which are involved in connection with damage to the property itself.

The question arises as to whether it is not essential also that there be some way in which this great return movement can be handled by the dominion government; and also whether it may not be necessary, in co-operation with the provincial and municipal authorities, to be able to establish in regard to reopening of property certain provisions that relate to the safety of the buildings, from both structural and health considerations, and the very important consideration of the state of electric wiring in these houses which have been flooded for so long. All these are things that would seem to require some authority that does not now exist.

I suggest to the minister that, in the light of this experience but not solely for the purpose of dealing with this particular disaster, it would be wise to introduce a very simple act, which could be dealt with at this session, to provide that in the case of what may be regarded as a national emergency it will be possible to declare such an emergency a national emergency; and under these circumstances to set up an agency which will be able to co-operate with the provincial and municipal bodies, all voluntary organizations, as well as to co-ordinate the activities of the various departments of government concerned.

With such legislation it would be possible for the dominion government to bring together representatives of all these departments which have these various interests, and fully respecting the provincial and municipal jurisdiction, to bring into effective co-operation the representatives of the municipal bodies. May I at this point say, what I am sure everyone has found who has had contact with them, that the municipal councils—and there are many concerned—and the agencies that they have created have done a truly magnificent job of which every Canadian should be proud. This was a great example to the whole of Canada, because rapidly improvised methods found the full support of every citizen.

One of the things which were constantly emphasized in the discussions on this subject was the spirit of the young people, who worked day and night in their fight against flood waters, and who contributed such a tremendous effort, because of their physical strength, to the building of the dikes and the maintenance of the various structures that actually succeeded in holding back the floods, and protecting great areas of property which otherwise would have been very badly