

Mr. STIRLING: Mr. Speaker, is the bill printed?

Mr. MACKENZIE: Yes.

Mr. STIRLING: Is the bill printed and distributed?

Mr. MACKENZIE: Printed.

Mr. STIRLING: Is the bill printed and distributed?

Mr. SPEAKER: I must inform the hon. member that the house leader has said that the bill is printed.

Mr. STIRLING: I think we should not consent to proceeding in the committee stage at the present time without the bill. We can go into committee, if that will facilitate matters, and rise and report progress.

Mr. MACKENZIE: I think that is a reasonable request, to have the house go into committee after second reading. The bill, I understand, has not been distributed to hon. members.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, and the house went into committee thereon, Mr. Macdonald (Brantford City) in the chair.

On section 1—Short title.

Mr. MACKENZIE: I move that the committee rise and report progress.

Mr. POULIOT: We have not the bill, and I protest.

The CHAIRMAN: Order. The hon. member for Vancouver Centre moves that the committee rise and report progress and asks leave to sit again.

Mr. POULIOT: And I hope that we shall have the bill in both languages.

Mr. MACKENZIE: That will be seen to. Progress reported.

RECONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLY

ESTABLISHMENT OF DEPARTMENT TO ASSUME FUNCTIONS OF RECONSTRUCTION AND MUNITIONS AND SUPPLY

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Munitions and Supply) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution.

That it is expedient to present to the house a bill to establish a department of government under a minister of the crown to be known as the Department of Reconstruction and Supply to which will be transferred the functions of the Department of Reconstruction and the Department of Munitions and Supply, and that provision be made in the bill for the appointment of a deputy minister and officers, clerks and employees of the department.

Mr. STIRLING: This was not mentioned last night, and in conversations which took place to-day we understood that if the other matter were through we should be going into civil estimates.

Mr. MACKENZIE: If my hon. friend will be good enough to look up the record he will find that it was stated that we would immediately proceed with the emergency power bill, but on request of my friends opposite we agreed to defer that until to-morrow and therefore we feel free to alter the procedure announced last night.

Mr. STIRLING: Does the minister propose to make a statement at this stage?

Mr. HOWE: Yes.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Macdonald (Brantford City) in the chair.

Mr. HOWE: It is my hope that we can consider the resolution and advance it to the point where the bill can be distributed and the main discussion can take place on the bill. In the speech from the throne it was announced that the government planned to introduce a bill for the consideration of the house for the purpose of merging the Department of Munitions and Supply and the Department of Reconstruction into a single department of reconstruction and supply. The purpose of doing so will appeal to all hon. members. We have at the present time two departments, the work of which overlaps to a considerable extent, each of which has a statutory organization, a minister and a deputy minister and certain officers that are required by any department. One department is winding up its work gradually and reducing its strength, and the other is building up its staff to some little extent, but the same type of staff is needed for each department.

Frankly, my trouble in attempting to operate two departments is that I cannot find sufficient senior staff to man both departments. Almost from the origin of the Department of Reconstruction I have been having part of my staff doing double duty. There has been one post in Munitions and Supply under one title and a second post in the Department of Reconstruction under another title.

Even that is becoming difficult. If the departments can be merged we shall reduce the double statutory offices into a single list of offices, and we shall use the man-power of both departments to much better advantage. It is becoming more and more obvious that the efficiency of both operations would be