

This is a very important matter. It involves more than an expenditure of money. Rather it deals with the use of our man-power to the best and fullest extent, so that we may preserve those skills and aptitudes which have been built up over a period of years. I suggest that we are entitled to know what the future of this plant is to be.

Mr. HOWE: Before six o'clock I should like to make one observation. I said that we would have a general discussion respecting the Department of Munitions and Supply, but the hon. member has spoken only about the Ministry of Reconstruction. When that unfortunate gentleman, the Minister of Reconstruction, comes before the committee, I am sure he will be very glad to discuss problems connected with reconstruction. At the present time, however, I suggest that we would get along better if we were to confine ourselves to matters connected with the Department of Munitions and Supply. I shall follow immediately after that with a statement on reconstruction. I shall be pleased to note what the hon. member has said, and to reply at that time.

Mr. STEWART (Winnipeg North): That is agreeable to me. It is hard at times, however, to distinguish between the various departments.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

After Recess

The committee resumed at eight o'clock.

Mr. MACDONNELL: Mr. Chairman, I would suggest to the minister that it might expedite matters if he would tell us just which crown companies he feels should be dealt with under Reconstruction and which under Munitions and Supply. Just before we rose at six o'clock he pointed out that he regarded Research Enterprises as a matter coming under Reconstruction and one that could be dealt with when we came to that department. If he could indicate what other companies, such as Polymer, should come under Reconstruction, it might simplify matters.

Mr. HOWE: The distinction is that we are dealing with the war-time operations of a crown company. Crown companies that functioned as war plants can be dealt with under Munitions and Supply, but if the future of the plant in which the war operations were carried on is under consideration and other arrangements are being made that is a matter for

Reconstruction. In other words, a plant that is declared surplus to government requirements would fall under the Department of Reconstruction and its future would be planned by that department. In the case of Research Enterprises the plant was engaged wholly in making war materials. The contracts are coming to an end and the future of the plant for peace-time use is in the hands of the Department of Reconstruction. As far as Polymer is concerned, that plant was making a material which could be used either for war or peace and it is still being operated by the Department of Munitions and Supply as it was in the war years.

Mr. MACDONNELL: Would that apply to Melbourne Trading?

Mr. HOWE: That is in process of liquidation; it is still Munitions and Supply. It is a trading company and it is being liquidated by Munitions and Supply.

Mr. MACDONNELL: What about Eldorado?

Mr. HOWE: It is continuing its operations; it is producing a war material and it will continue to be operated in the future as it has been in the past. The amalgamation of the two departments will automatically solve many of these problems.

Mr. MACDONNELL: What about War-time Metals?

Mr. HOWE: Wartime Metals has been liquidated, it is no longer in existence. It was wholly a creature of Munitions and Supply. Generally speaking, crown companies are under Munitions and Supply, but the future of the buildings in some cases rests with the Department of Reconstruction.

Mr. MACDONNELL: What about War Assets?

Mr. HOWE: War Assets is under Department of Reconstruction.

Mr. FLEMING: It was my intention to discuss Research Enterprises and the future of that plant. In view of the statement made by the minister just before the committee rose at six o'clock, I should like to know if it is your view, Mr. Chairman, that this matter should be discussed when we reach the estimates of the Department of Reconstruction. If that is so, I am quite prepared to defer my remarks until that time, but I should like a ruling on that point.

Mr. HOWE: Since Research Enterprises has been discussed at some length, perhaps we might have a full discussion on it to-night.