

one has a right to his own opinion. I am opposed and will remain opposed to the government entering into business, conducting business itself, manufacturing agricultural implements, boilers, or furniture or anything else. I have spent twenty-five years in business and I know something about it. I do not at any time discuss either law or medicine because I do not know anything about those matters, but after twenty-five years in business I do know something about employment, notwithstanding what anyone else may think. The industrialists of the country have done a magnificent job; down the years they have given employment to millions of people, and industry should not be scoffed at and made light of by anybody, no matter who he may be or where he may come from. Certainly no industrialist would scoff at industry or employment or anyone associated therewith. In reference to these projects I support them because I understand what they mean, as explained by the minister, namely, that the department will initiate works programmes, one of which is in connection with roads and let contracts therefor to take up the slack if at any time industry is not able to do so. That was my conception of the Department of Reconstruction. It has never been my conception that the department should enter into private business and carry on industrial enterprises in peace time.

Mr. STIRLING: One of the minister's colleagues said some time ago that it was not the government's intention to proceed with public works for the purpose of employing people at that time. Can the minister tell us whether he foresees that we are more nearly approaching that time? Does he expect in the reasonably near future that the government will be embarking on some of these projects? Second, can he say whether there is a list established of work which, when that day comes, the government proposes to undertake.

Mr. HOWE: It is the view of the Department of Reconstruction that no extensive public works will be required for the next year or two, certainly for the next year. The country is faced with a great problem of building homes sufficient for the people and in repairing the wear and tear of past years. That work is not being carried out, owing to the fact that it takes some time for the construction industry to gain momentum. The railroads have stopped buying steel rails because they cannot get men to lay them, and maintenance of any kind is quite deficient. To start public works would only delay work

that is absolutely necessary for the conduct of the normal economy. That is a general statement applying across Canada, though there are local conditions that vary it. There are a few spots in Canada where some public works will be necessary in the reasonably near future, and there may be some unemployment in the winter, inevitably, with the seasonal aspect of employment, reconversion of factories and accelerated discharges from the armed services. That will be incidental to the relocation of the population which must take place, because if everyone in Canada settled on the Pacific coast, for instance, we could not find employment enough for the people there. There must be a distribution of men to the various areas where work is naturally available, but I am certain that by next spring there will be employment for all. I am certain of that, without the need for any artificial programme of public works.

Mr. STIRLING: Is there an established list of public works which the minister contemplates undertaking when that time comes?

Mr. HOWE: It is being established, yes.

Mr. PROBE: With reference to section 9, paragraph (e) "supplies", as I understand it, the minister is empowered to enter into contracts for reconstruction purposes. According to this section, he is empowered to get such supplies as are enumerated here: materials, equipment, ships, aircraft, automobiles, vehicles, animals, goods, stores, articles, or commodities of any kind, including anything which in the opinion of the minister is or is likely to be necessary for production, storage or supply for reconstruction, and so on. Does this section mean that we are now with one hand, through War Assets Corporation, unloading two billion dollars' worth of goods paid for by the ratepayers of the country, and with the other hand writing cheques for more materials that are likely to be used for reconstruction?

Mr. HOWE: No.

Mr. PROBE: Will the minister explain the situation?

Mr. HOWE: The answer is no. There is no other answer.

Mr. PROBE: Definitely no?

Mr. HOWE: That is it.

Mr. JACKMAN: Is the minister considering the taking over of building projects of the Department of Public Works? If not, what coordination will there be between his department and Public Works?