

*Reconstruction and Supply*

Mr. HOWE: The Department of Munitions and Supply is in process of liquidation, and will disappear just as fast as we can liquidate it. The life of the Department of Reconstruction was limited originally to four years. One year has elapsed; it is now limited to three years: we hope we can liquidate it sooner than that. The purpose of the department is to convert the wartime economy back to a normal civilian economy. As soon as that can be accomplished I shall be a man without a job, a displaced person.

Mr. CASE: The minister says that the Department of Munitions and Supply is being liquidated as rapidly as possible. Am I to understand then that, when we pass this bill, if there is any carryover from the Department of Munitions and Supply it will be handled by this new department?

Mr. HOWE: Yes.

Mr. CASE: Therefore as far as we are concerned there will no longer be a department of munitions and supply.

Mr. MacINNIS: I was disappointed with the minister's reply to the hon. member for Rosedale. It did not seem to me that that reply was in accord with the point of view which we heard here last night. The minister hopes and perhaps a great many other hon. members hope that at the end of four years we shall be back to normal and that there will be no need for a department of Reconstruction. I should like to ask the minister what his conception of "normal" is. Will "normal" be the condition which prevailed in this country from 1929 to 1939? If that is normalcy there is certainly something needed, and I do not believe the hon. member for Rosedale has the answer, because the party he is speaking for had every opportunity to make this a pleasant land from 1929 to 1935 and they failed, and failed miserably.

Last evening the hon. member for Muskoka-Ontario said that in the next few years' times will be very difficult and that there will be great need for the Department of Reconstruction. Does anyone in this committee believe that times will change so much for the better in three or four years that we shall have no need for government intervention, not just for social reconstruction but to prevent social disintegration by making some employment? I am sorry that the minister's social outlook is not a little brighter, because, as I mentioned last night, I believe he could do good work in that direction. He has capacity for that kind of work, and I want to tell him that it will be needed and that they might as well start planning right now.

[Mr. Jackman.]

Section agreed to.

Section 8 agreed to.

On section 9—Definitions.

Mr. MacNICOL: Paragraph (a) of this section mentions a number of the "projects" which the department has in mind. I am not quite clear as to what each project means. I can understand what is meant by "air ports" and "dockyards": I presume those will be for government docks and for Trans-Canada airports? What is the significance of the reference here to "roads"?

Mr. HOWE: The old act referred to defence projects and this merely refers to projects. The only change is the deletion of the word defence.

Mr. MacNICOL: But what is the significance of the word "roads"?

Mr. HOWE: The government has a policy for maintaining a high level of employment and income, as indicated in the government white paper, and that policy contemplates that when private industry is unable to maintain full employment the government steps in with a programme of public works.

Mr. MacNICOL: I agree with that.

Mr. HOWE: It may be that the government at that time will wish the Department of Reconstruction to place contracts for such public works and this gives the authority.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am heartily in accord with that. In other words, if Trans-Canada were to be completed, the plans and specifications pertaining to the roadway would be prepared; tenders would be called and contracts awarded.

Mr. HOWE: That is right.

Mr. MacNICOL: I am heartily in accord with the department initiating any works and letting them by contract to give employment. I agree with what an hon. member to my left said a moment ago, that this is imperative and also that all these projects mentioned should be along that line. What is the significance of "enterprises for industry"?

Mr. HOWE: That is the wording of the present reconstruction act.

Mr. MacNICOL: It does not mean that the government would erect industrial factories and operate them?

Mr. HOWE: No.

Mr. MacNICOL: I have no hesitation in repeating what I said before, despite what anyone else says to the contrary, and every-