

wholly upon the problems of the Department of Justice? I might explain that the reason I ask this question has to do with the situation in the Department of Transport, which I think could probably stand several more associate deputy ministers; that is, in terms of the size of the organization. I am wondering whether there is any principle or any past practice that has relation to the Department of Justice and on which the minister could comment.

Mr. Fulton: No, Mr. Chairman, at least our decision was not based on that. There have been instances in the past where there have been associate deputy ministers of other departments. I think particularly of the Department of National Defence, where there was provision for the position of associate deputy minister; I think that when the Department of Defence Production was first set up there was also provision for an associate deputy minister; but, I must say, that in the present case the decision has been made on the basis of the nature and quality of the work done and required to be done in the Department of Justice.

The fact of the matter is that, with the possible exception of the Department of Finance, the Department of Justice enters more directly into and has more direct relationships with the work of all the other departments of government than does any other single department. It is the responsibility of this department to advise all other departments, and to draft the legislation of all other departments. All other departments come to us with respect to their legal problems, and these are multitudinous, so that the relationship between the Department of Justice and every other department of government is constant and important and, I am happy to say, very pleasant and cordial.

I think that is one of the prime reasons why it is more appropriate to have associate deputy ministers in the Department of Justice than it would perhaps be in the case of other departments, because of the volume and nature of our relationships with every other department of government and the fact that these relationships are frequently carried on at a relatively high level, the level of relatively senior officers of departments. For these reasons it seems appropriate to confirm—I will not say to improve, because it would be difficult to have more pleasant relationship—an appropriate change to make to introduce positions for two associate deputy ministers in the Department of Justice.

Resolution reported, read the second time and concurred in.

National Housing Act

Mr. Fulton thereupon moved to introduce Bill No. C-47, to amend the Department of Justice Act.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: When shall the bill be read the second time?

Some hon. Members: Now.

Mr. Pearson: By unanimous consent.

Mr. Fulton: Unanimous consent.

Mr. Fulton thereupon moved the second reading of the bill.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time, considered in committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

NATIONAL HOUSING ACT

AMENDMENTS INCREASING AGGREGATE AMOUNT OF INSURED LOANS, ETC.

Hon. D. J. Walker (Minister of Public Works) moved that the house go into committee to consider the following resolution:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the National Housing Act, 1954 to increase the aggregate amount of all loans in respect of which insurance policies may be issued under the Act from four billion dollars to six billion dollars; and to increase from one billion dollars to one and a half billion dollars the aggregate amount that may be paid out of the consolidated revenue fund for the purposes specified in subsection 1 of section 22 of the said act.

Motion agreed to and the house went into committee, Mr. Flynn in the chair.

Mr. Walker: Mr. Chairman, this is a resolution preceding the introduction of a bill to amend the National Housing Act. May I first say how pleased I am, after having been interested in low cost housing for 25 years, and having seen the lower part of my riding of Rosedale redeemed so that it is now one of the show places on the continent of low rental housing, to have the opportunity of acting as a minister of the crown reporting to the house on national housing.

May I very briefly review the history of the housing field in the past two and one-half years? When this government came to power in 1957 our economy was headed toward a recession. The general economic situation, and the housing situation in particular, clearly pointed to the need for vigorous action on the part of the government. The housing industry was suffering almost worse than any other industry and had declined ever since the third quarter of 1955. By the first quarter of 1957, the annual rate of housing had reached a 5-year low of 86,000 units.