

not uninhabited territories. They are scattered communities in which a great many people are living, but which up to to-day have not organized as a municipality or village. There is on Vancouver island a shortage of houses in the rural districts. If these hutments could be made available on the same priority as was given to the municipality, then groups of business men, farmers associations, the legion, or some other recognized group of citizens in the rural community could utilize those hutments to the benefit of the area. Could similar priority be given to recognized groups in these unorganized territories?

Mr. HOWE: War Assets Corporation is always ready to give priority to a non-profit organization, but it must be a bona fide non-profit organization. If it is, it gets practically the same priority which goes to an organized public government; that is, a municipality or a city. But it must deal in a way which makes it perfectly evident that it is not engaged in profit making.

Mr. PEARKES: Yes, I mean a non-profit organization.

Mr. McIVOR: I should like to give an example of the procedure of the War Assets agent in Port Arthur. The agency sold a number of beds. We found that one of the local boys' or girls' camps wanted these beds, but they were too late for the sale. The agent said, "You can still get those beds, and you will get them at the price which we state". Very little was made by the local store, I believe no more than 5 or 10 per cent, certainly not more than 15 per cent, and the local camp was very well pleased because of this sale of war assets.

Mr. JACKMAN: I find myself somewhat at a loss to know what the future of this Department of Reconstruction and Supply will be. In the first place the minister said that it was of a temporary nature, almost self-liquidating, and in reply to the hon. member for Carleton he said that because of its temporary nature it was impossible to put any substantial number of the staff under the civil service. Then my hon. colleague—

Mr. HOWE: I wish that my hon. friend, if he desires to quote me, would quote me correctly.

Mr. JACKMAN: The minister may amend my statement if he so desires.

Mr. HOWE: I said that the entire staff was under the civil service, but I said that, the department being a temporary one, it could make only temporary appointments. But it is certainly under the civil service.

Every employee is obtained through the civil service commission. My hon. friend has not heard of the difference between permanents and temporaries, I suppose.

Mr. JACKMAN: Civil servants?

Mr. HOWE: Yes.

Mr. JACKMAN: I understand the ordinary practice is that 10 per cent of the staff of a department is kept on temporarily.

Mr. HOWE: In a temporary department 100 per cent of the staff is temporary, unless they are borrowed from permanent departments. No power on earth will permit me to appoint a permanent employee in the Department of Munitions and Supply or in the Department of Reconstruction.

Mr. JACKMAN: Do I understand that, of the 2,000 employees who will be in the combined departments of munitions and supply and reconstruction by next April, a substantial proportion will be under the ordinary Civil Service Act? Perhaps the minister will tell the committee what the number will be.

Mr. HOWE: They will all be under the Civil Service Act, but they will be temporaries.

Mr. JACKMAN: I think I understand the situation now. The hon. member for Calgary West said that he would like to see the powers of the minister extended in the regulation of business. I wish to know whether the minister intends that this Department of Reconstruction and Supply will gradually disappear after the so-called emergency following the war, or will it grow, will it maintain its staff as of, say, next April, or will it gradually diminish? For instance, we have at the present time a shortage of housing, so that the minister engages in wartime housing. I suppose the time may come when there will be a shortage, not of supply but of demand, and then the minister will say that government money must be spent to maintain employment, and that is a policy with which perhaps we are all in sympathy. But I do not think the committee has yet a very clear understanding of what this bill envisages in the way of the amount of power, whether it will grow and grow like a snowball, as power so often does in the hands of a department; once set up, it seldom relinquishes it and is always looking for new fields in which to exercise its authority and keep its place in the sun. I should like the minister to outline if he can just what growth or what disappearance he expects of the functions of this department over, let us say, the next business cycle, a term with which he is quite familiar.