

Newfoundland

Mr. Knowles: What unfounded charges, may I ask?

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Knowles: On a point of privilege, the leader of the opposition has referred to my making unfounded charges. What is the unfounded charge?

Mr. Drew: That I was unwilling to indicate what our position was, when we put forward the proposal. Now, control yourselves for a moment and you will hear the answer.

An hon. Member: Stop the mudslinging and answer the question.

Some hon. Members: Order.

The Chairman: Order.

Mr. Drew: They are working together nicely.

An hon. Member: The same as Bloc Populaire.

Mr. Abbott: Give us your answer, after plenty of time to think it over.

Mr. Drew: Yes, and I have something to say to you.

The proposals put forward at the conference have been supplemented since then by various further suggestions which were under consideration at the conference. The proposal was for contributory old age pensions. I have indicated quite clearly that I believe that the people of this country are willing and anxious to contribute to satisfactory social security plans. And I am satisfied the people of this country do not want to pay a poll tax, because that form of tax has always been regarded as a very unsatisfactory form of tax in this country.

Mr. Harris (Danforth): On a point of order, I submit that this entire discussion is out of order. The opposition is not charged with the responsibility of government. Hon. members of the socialist party should address their questions through you, Mr. Chairman, as you are charged with the responsibility of control of the house. In like manner, all hon. members should address their questions through you.

The Chairman: I must thank the hon. member for Danforth for his remarks, and I would ask all hon. members to address the Chair in future.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Chairman, may I address my remarks to section 40 of the schedule. Perhaps the Minister of Trade and Commerce would answer, as the Minister of Reconstruction and Supply is not in his seat. This afternoon the large amount of \$20 million was mentioned, including quite a

[Mr. Drew.]

number of services. Would the Minister of Trade and Commerce give some information regarding the discussion which took place in connection with housing?

I find that at page 108 of the report of June 25 to September 29, 1947, there is mention of the St. John's housing corporation, which was set up under the Newfoundland commission of government four or five years ago. This statement is made:

As a result of historical conditions, St. John's is about 70 per cent substandard houses and the problem is beyond the means of the city to finance. Since the corporation began its work it has spent some three or four millions of Newfoundland money. The corporation has acquired 800 acres of land, has constructed a tunnel to the seashore for the purpose of disposal of sewage, laid sewers and water and sewer mains, set up its own factory for sewer pipe and block, and by the end of the present building season will have constructed 350 dwellings. It will be in a solvent position when these are all sold or let.

I understand now that Newfoundland will not be eligible for this type of financial assistance after confederation. I note on the next page, however, the following:

The foregoing describes the situation which exists under present legislation.

There was some discussion of legislation which does exist in Canada in respect of housing. Then it states:

This legislation is subject to adjustment from time to time to meet changing conditions and the government is always prepared to take into consideration any particular circumstances which might warrant adjustment in the legislation.

I wonder if the Minister of Trade and Commerce could report on the discussion which took place with the delegates from Newfoundland, and what machinery will now exist to make it possible to continue the practice in Newfoundland that was undertaken by the St. John's housing corporation?

Mr. Howe: It was understood that the facilities of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation would be available in Newfoundland, just as they are available in other parts of Canada. The building project in question differs from any plan we have in Canada in that the houses are built to be sold. The expenses in developing the land were considerably more than anticipated. The fund is not in good shape at the present time, and the work is being retarded. Mr. Mansur, president of the corporation, visited Newfoundland some three weeks ago and had a discussion with those responsible for the fund. I visited Newfoundland last week end, and I was told that the discussions were very satisfactory. As it was not my responsibility at the present time, I did not go into detail in the matter; but I know it will be the purpose of the corporation to see that houses