

TORONTO, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1943

**CABINET MINISTERS DIFFER
ON NEED FOR BIG WORKS PROGRAM.**

Seldom has the country been shown such a spectacle of ministerial disagreement as that disclosed in the speeches of Hon. C. D. Howe in Toronto and Hon. Ian Mackenzie in Vancouver on the best policy to assure employment after the war to war veterans and munitions workers.

Speaking to the Toronto Canadian Club on Monday the Minister of Munitions warned the people to stop thinking in terms of making jobs by the spending of public money. Said Mr. Howe: "Let's build our post-war plans, not on the narrow base of public works and the dole but rather on the broad base of private industry, agriculture and forests, mines and fisheries."

In Vancouver, addressing another luncheon club four hours later (the difference between Toronto and Pacific coast time) Mr. Mackenzie, the Minister of Pensions and Health, announced: "We propose having in readiness a great program of public-assisted enterprises, public works, development projects of all sorts, so that there may be a bridge on which we can cross the gap between peace and war."

This disagreement in the open by these two ministers is said by news dispatches from Ottawa to be the "blow off" in a situation which has been simmering behind the closed doors of the cabinet. It is not simply a question of a big public works program or no program. The issue in the cabinet is reputed to be on whether the government should commit itself and the Liberal party to a policy of out-promising the C.C.F. or keep to a conservative line, affording private industry an opportunity to go to work providing employment after the war.

A cleavage of opinion in the cabinet along these lines gives no cause for surprise. The government is a facade behind which men of widely different temperaments and beliefs have worked. Mr. Howe, as might be expected, has the outlook of a business man. He prospered in his private business and he believes that private enterprise holds the greatest opportunity for the development of the nation. Finance Minister Ilsley, a lawyer, is a believer in orthodox monetary policies. Opposite to these two is Mr. Mackenzie with a different viewpoint. On more than one occasion since his entry into Parliament Mr. Mackenzie has expressed himself in favor of unorthodox and often radical policies.

But apart altogether from these divergencies of opinion within the cabinet, the speeches of Mr. Howe and Mr. Mackenzie respecting the necessity of a large post-war public works program raises a question that should be seriously examined. There has been too much talk about the inevitability of a depression after the war with a public works program, financed out of taxes to provide employment. Mr. Howe holds the view that if business is given an opportunity it can provide work for all by producing for the consumer demand which will exist. He supports his opinion with some convincing arguments. Those who take a less optimistic viewpoint and talk about inaugurating costly, non-productive public projects are motivated either by fear or, in the case of the C.C.F., a desire to cast discredit upon the private enterprise system.

149
WAR
EUROPEAN
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CANADA
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