

Supply—Mines

the continent for the investigation of mineral resources, ore dressing and metallurgical research work. The services of the mines branch are available in an advisory capacity for mining in all its various branches. For instance, if a mining company becomes involved in some metallurgical trouble that they cannot solve, they frequently ask the assistance of the mines branch. The branch provides as well a very extensive service for prospectors in analyses and identification of ores. Their work is quite broad in its scope and very useful to the mining industry.

Mr. COOTE: Do the officials of the mines branch go to different parts of Canada to investigate mineral resources, or is the work all done here in Ottawa?

Mr. GORDON: From time to time officers from the mines branch go into the field in order to keep themselves posted upon various matters of mining technology; of course, they must be very careful not to lend themselves to sealing with approval any mining proposition; but they do spend a certain portion of the year going from place to place in Canada, and sometimes out of Canada, in order to keep their research work up to date.

Mr. COOTE: Could the minister give the committee a rough idea of the amount which is spent on that kind of investigational work? Is it done to any considerable extent?

Mr. GORDON: The expense of the work in the field has never been separately set out in the books of the department, but I am told that in travelling expenses of the various technical men about \$10,000 may be spent in a year. These are the divisions of the mines branch: mineral resources; ore dressing and metallurgy; fuel and fuel testing; ceramics and road materials; the mechanical section; and the Dominion Fuel Board. Of course as occasion requires the work does take the staff into various parts of the country. I am sorry I cannot give the hon. member a definite statement as to what money is actually spent in the field.

Mr. COOTE: I think the department was doing some experimental work in connection with the deposits of bituminous tar sand in the north country. Would that come under this particular vote? If so, could the minister give us some information about it?

Mr. GORDON: The department has opened up a bituminous sand deposit at MacMurray, and the Alberta government has carried on the separation. The deposit is still

[Mr. Gordon.]

under review by the department as to its possible value. It has certain attractive features which I do not think have yet been definitely determined. I am told several reports have been published by the department on the work already done.

Mr. COOTE: Is that work still being carried on by the dominion? I think the department did have an officer spend a good deal of his time in that area.

Mr. GORDON: We are still carrying on the field work. We have a party there this summer to determine the extent of the deposit and its possible value.

Mr. SPENCER: I understand some very valuable experimental work is being carried on in England in connection with the low temperature carbonization or liquefaction of coal. Has the mines branch done anything along this line?

Mr. GORDON: That work has been under investigation for the past four or five years by the fuel testing division. It is being continued and the results from time to time are available for those interested in the industry. I am told that a number of reports have been made, and that one was recently placed at the disposal of hon. members.

Mr. SPENCER: What success has resulted?

Mr. GORDON: I have not read the recent reports on the work done in connection with fuels and fuel testing, so I regret that I cannot give details of what progress has been made.

Mr. GERSHAW: When the officers of the department do research work or give advice to private individuals or companies, do they make a charge for it?

Mr. GORDON: Where the advice of the department is sought on matters of that character it has not been the custom to charge the industry anything. Charges are made for analyses of various ores submitted. One of the reasons for making such charges is that the department might easily come into competition with private assayers, and it would be unfair to them to do the work gratuitously. But generally speaking where a mining problem such as a refractory ore has to be dealt with, and the mining company finds itself in difficulty as to the method of treatment and seeks advice, the department gives its services without charge.