

of June 3, 1957, in what the Prime Minister now calls the servile press, although he did not call them that in those days.

Speaking on maritime issues in the coal mining district of Minto, N.B., Mr. Diefenbaker said that—

—the Liberal government is not taking action to help the coal industry. There should be federal treasury aid towards the cost of freighting coal within the maritimes.

It is interesting to note that there is nothing there about subventions to power plants. That was five years ago and now I ask the minister who is in charge of the dominion coal board, is there any likelihood of that promise being kept before March 31, 1962?

Mr. Winch: I am not interested in any snarling between Liberals and Conservatives. I am not interested in any past red books or white papers. My interest is in this vote which has to deal with the matter of coal in Canada. I realize, as we all do, that the present minister has only been in his high office for a short period of time but he is the minister now in charge of technical surveys and coal. For that reason I ask him whether any action is being taken by himself or in his department to establish a national coal policy for Canada. The time is long past when that should have been done.

From Nova Scotia to British Columbia we have perhaps what I would describe as the greatest resources of coal anywhere in the world. We have all grades of coal from lignite to bituminous and anthracite. In other words, we have everything from soft coal to steam coal, but we are in the extraordinary situation that the Canadian taxpayers have to spend millions and millions of dollars a year on subsidizing the various aspects of the coal industry, either directly or by freight subsidies. To me that seems positively stupid because, as I say, we have all kinds of coal from lignite to anthracite, and in British Columbia we have billions of tons of anthracite which have never yet been opened up and developed. Yet we import millions of tons of coal each year from south of the border.

We import it right into Nova Scotia where we have our lignite coal mines. Ontario hydro imports it into Ontario, and we cannot do anything about that because it is a provincial matter. Polymer, a federally owned crown company, imports its coal from the United States.

Mr. Woolliams: I wonder if the hon. member would answer a question? I think what he is saying does not hold true in regard to sub-bituminous coal and soft domestic coal. There is sub-bituminous coal in Alberta which is being exported at the moment.

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Mr. Winch: My hon. friend is very fortunate in his own particular riding, and thereabouts, in that they are now able to export their coal to Japan.

Mr. Woolliams: That is right.

Mr. Winch: It is the lignite; it is the soft coal.

Mr. Woolliams: It is the sub-bituminous.

Mr. Winch: I say we import millions of tons of coal into Canada. The federal government pays out millions of dollars annually to support the coal industry. If we take the situation as it exists across Canada, we have every type of coal that is known and which could be required. Surely we now need a national coal policy. That is all I ask.

Has the minister yet had time to give consideration to the entire coal situation from Nova Scotia to British Columbia with regard to imports and exports; and if not, is it a matter that the minister has under very serious consideration?

Mr. Herridge: Mr. Chairman, first of all I want to congratulate the minister on the appointment to his present portfolio and wish him well in all he undertakes for the general advantage of our country. That is a safe statement.

From 1945 or 1946 up to about 1955 this house was informed from time to time of experiments in connection with a gas turbine, the purpose of which was to utilize large quantities of our coal. From time to time we were given glowing accounts of near success. I remember listening very carefully on a number of occasions to the reports on these experiments. Since 1955 there has been a sort of gap of silence and we have heard very little about this gas turbine and the experiments in relation thereto.

I mention this matter because the experiments were being conducted with a view to using coal, I think on locomotives, other engines and things of that sort. Is the minister in a position to bring the committee up to date on the latest developments and what progress is being made, or have the experiments been discontinued?

Mr. Flynn: Mr. Chairman, I am afraid I am not in a position to give an answer to the hon. member on these specific experiments. I have been informed that they have been discontinued, but I would rather check on this before giving him a definite answer. I could send him a letter on this matter. I am afraid I cannot say any more at the present time.

Mr. Robichaud: Mr. Chairman, I have only one question I should like to ask the minister before this item is passed. Could the minister