

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

he lay claim to it being original, but that was the impression he left with this committee.

Regarding the possibilities of a solution to the problem, and at the outset I inform hon. members that it is not my original idea, but was contained in a report regarding the activities of the coal industries of the United States, I suggest that the international leader of my own union has seen fit to promote the idea of coal by wire, in respect of electrical heating for homes, and has committed his support to the extent of \$250,000 for the promotion of this scheme conceived of by the electrical contractors' association of the United States.

I suggest there is a great potential in this regard for the coal industry. In order to promote this scheme it will, of course, be necessary to reduce the cost of power greatly. I have been informed that there are at least 10,000 homes in the province of Quebec which are heated electrically. When we are considering the superiority of coal as a fuel, as compared with oil and natural gas, I suggest in respect to this scheme of coal by wire, coal is much superior to the other types of fuel.

I understand this scheme of providing domestic heat through the use of coal as a fuel has been considered seriously in the province of Ontario, and that there is a great potential in this field for the coal industry. The adoption of such a scheme, of course, will not alleviate the situation which exists in Nova Scotia today. However, it will do much to alleviate the problems of the coal industry in the future.

Mr. Chairman, I should like at this point to make representations regarding the policies of the coal company itself. I should also like to refer to statements made during the last coal conference here in Ottawa, as referred to by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate. I have reference, of course, to the statement made by the Minister of Labour, to that conference, that the government would pick up the tab. I suggest the hon. member has tried to leave the impression with this committee that the Minister of Labour has reneged in this regard. That is not the case at all. Up until this time the only formula the government has found, in an attempt to assist the coal industry, involves subventions. There is no other formula which could be adopted, and which would be workable in providing this assistance.

The government has offered this type of assistance to the coal industry, but the coal company, as a result of its own policies, has indicated it will have no part of this assistance. In this regard, I should like to refer to the meeting held in December of last year, at which time it was indicated, by representatives of the coal company, that the Caledonia

colliery was to be closed on January 14. That meeting was attended, as the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has said, by representatives from Cape Breton, including civic leaders, union leaders, the provincial premier, and representatives from the clergy and municipalities.

At that time the company took the stand that it was not interested in federal aid which the government offered to provide. It was very adamant in its rejection of government aid offered to avert the closing of the Caledonia colliery. I intend at this stage to refer to a statement, which is fully substantiated by remarks made by union leaders from Cape Breton, to the effect that if it had not been for the efforts of the Minister of Labour, the Caledonia colliery closure should not have been postponed from January 14 until Wednesday last. The Minister of Labour brought about the extension of the deadline set for the closing of that mine, and has been properly given credit by union leaders for his efforts in that regard.

I deplore the attitude on the part of the company in refusing to accept federal aid. I have made certain statements regarding union leadership; however, I do not think I can appropriately express here today my abhorrence of that company's policies.

First of all, we must consider the remarks made by Mr. Albert Fairley, the president of the company, during the December conference, to the effect that the Caledonia colliery was being closed because it was an uneconomical operation. I should like to state at this time that I protested those remarks, and Mr. Fairley then denied having made them. Whether or not I now receive any support from any quarter, I am willing to swear an affidavit in this committee, or outside, to the effect that Albert Fairley said he was closing the Caledonia colliery because it was uneconomical. His statement in that regard is absolutely incorrect. I might state that when I protested his remarks I did not receive any support whatever from the executive officers of the U.M.W. Mr. Fairley can be proved wrong in that statement by his own statements made at an earlier conference, when he said that the Caledonia colliery was one of the topmost collieries in an economical sense. Mr. Fairley denied having made the statement regarding economics at all. As a result of criticism appearing in the *Halifax Chronicle-Herald* of the company's policy, the company, as late as December 30, 1960, or January 30, 1961, decided to answer the criticism, and once again put a statement on record to the effect that the colliery was being closed because it was uneconomical. I repeat, that is an absolutely false statement.