

short time ago the Minister of Mines and Resources said that he was not competent to judge on the mistakes made. Having made that statement he, as a responsible minister, cannot merely rise in his place and deny these allegations, expecting his denial to carry a great deal of weight, since already he has said that he is not competent to judge as to these mistakes. In what other way can a proper investigation be made than the way suggested by a responsible minister of Alberta, the Hon. Mr. Fallow? Surely a responsible man would not make such statements unless they had some foundation, and in the same breath ask this government to set up a royal commission to investigate the charges, for he would know very well that he would be one of the first witnesses to be called. Then he went on to say:

At the time that the dominion government took control of this property, about the first thing they did was to cancel the agreement which existed between the research council of Alberta and the Abasand Oil Company in which both parties agreed to cooperate in research and investigation in order to improve the separation process.

I think that is true; I do not believe there can be any disagreement on that.

We were advised that all future research work would be carried on by the dominion government.

That is an amazing thing in time of war, with labour so scarce and skilled technicians so hard to find. You would think the dominion government would have been anxious to make use of the scientific research of the university of Alberta or anyone else to assist in the development of this natural resource, but apparently that was not the case.

As a result of the circumstances which we found, I made a public statement at Vermilion on November 9 last, charging sabotage and a deliberate attempt to discredit the whole undertaking.

That is a very strong statement.

On November 11 last, under an Ottawa date-line, my remarks were criticized as "sheer nonsense" in which it was also claimed that there was a shortage of equipment and man-power.

The Minister of Mines and Resources spoke about the shortage of man-power and the priority difficulties. Here is what Mr. Fallow had to say in that connection as a result of his inspection:

I want to assure you, Mr. Speaker, that on the two occasions when I visited this plant there was certainly no evidence of a shortage of man-power or machinery. There was enough machinery and man-power to handle half a dozen plants of this size, most of which was idle.

I am not going to quote any more of the charges made by Mr. Fallow, but certainly

[Mr. C. E. Johnston.]

there is enough evidence to compel this government, for the sake of its own self-respect, to hold an investigation and see if these statements are true. When I spoke on this question on March 21 of this year I went into the matter in detail to the best of my ability. I had only one reason for doing so; I want to see these tar sands developed, because in my opinion we are short of oil and this war might be easily lost through lack of sufficient fuel for our machines and aircraft.

Mr. ROSS (Calgary East): Did Mr. Fallow cause the saboteurs to be prosecuted?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): This is a dominion affair.

Mr. ROSS (Calgary East): Oh, no; the province could prosecute them.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): No; the hon. member cannot get away from the responsibility in that way. This is definitely a dominion affair. It does not even matter so much whether or not Mr. Fallow informed the Minister of Mines and Resources. The point is that now the Minister of Mines and Resources has this information and he is aware of the charges which were made.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): May I ask the hon. member who made the charges?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): The Hon. Mr. Fallow.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Is he a responsible minister of the crown of Alberta?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): He is the minister of public works.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Why did he not follow up his charges by appointing a royal commission of the province of Alberta to investigate them?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): The Minister of Pensions and National Health knows very well why that would not be done. If the provincial government set up a royal commission it could not demand that these civil servants who work for the dominion government should appear before it.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Nonsense.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Bow River): That is the responsibility of this government.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): That is nonsense.