

*Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act*

In the June 2, 1960 issue of the *Northern Miner* an editorial entitled "Masters of Innuendo" appears. The editorial begins by saying:

Socialists Peters and Fisher, C.C.F. members representing Timiskaming and Port Arthur respectively are up to their old tricks again. Two years ago when the Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act was up for renewal they indulged in an amazing display of innuendo. Now that E.G.M.A. is once more before the house, and they can hide behind the cloak of parliamentary immunity, they are at it again, doing their best to smear the gold mining industry by spreading false information.

**An hon. Member:** Is that true?

**Mr. Fisher:** I should like to make it perfectly clear that I am not hiding behind the cloak of parliamentary immunity in any remarks I make and if the *Northern Miner* wishes to give me a platform free from parliamentary immunity I will repeat anything I have said to date about gold mining.

This newspaper had some interesting things to say about the argument we presented some two years ago. At that time I wrote a letter to the editor of the newspaper setting a forth my position and suggesting he publish the letter. It was not published and I did not have the courtesy of a reply. I think it is an abomination when a member of parliament is accused of hiding behind a cloak of parliamentary immunity when he is only trying to underline the fact that the sum of \$112 million, I believe—

**An hon. Member:** \$131 million.

**Mr. Fisher:** My hon. friend says \$131 million—will have been paid out this year in emergency aid to gold mines in Canada. In view of that amount it is our duty to be suspicious of the administration and the way things are going. If it is any consolation to the *Northern Miner* I am suspicious of many government departments and the way they spend their money as I am sure many hon. members are and should be. Surely it is our responsibility to check matters closely.

Our point throughout has been that we have not been completely satisfied with the checks carried on by the minister's officials in this regard. It is stated right in the act that the inspectors of the department have the right to go down into the mines and examine them. The minister's evidence is that they hardly ever do, that it is not considered necessary. In other words, the mines can be trusted and it is simply an accounting operation. Perhaps it is but I would feel much better if the provision in the act under which they can go down into the mines and inspect them was carried out.

It is not my purpose to smear the gold mines although I think I would have the right to do so from my past experience. After

[Mr. Fisher.]

the war I returned and attempted to get a job in a mine but discovered that I was on the blacklist in northern Ontario for what were supposed to be some bunkhouse activities in a mine in which I formerly worked. I had only tried to see that we did not have money lopped off our pay without our consent and approval but for this I was put on the blacklist of all the mines in the Pickle lake and Red lake camps. I have some reason to be suspicious of the activities of gold mine management, but that is beside the point. Anyone who has travelled through northern Ontario or camped, portaged or canoed there will realize that there are thousands of mining prospects in gold that went through speculators and stock purchasers and collapsed. It has been said that only one out of approximately 1,000 mines in Ontario ever goes into production after the formation of a company. I say that to point out that there is every reason for us to be properly suspicious of the industry and of any group that receives \$131 million out of the public treasury in order to keep the industry going. The article continues:

These two are masters of innuendo. Mr. Fisher, in particular, is adept in the use of the ploy whereby he attempts to evade responsibility for what he says and tries to put the onus on somebody else. For instance, in charging the gold mines with "low grading" Mr. Fisher is cute enough to avoid making a direct accusation. He puts it in the mouth of other people by saying "every miner I have talked to... believes that low grading is going on."

I will repeat that every miner I have talked to thinks that low grading is going on. Last week I spoke to the electrical superintendent of a large mine. This man has worked in half a dozen large mines in northern Ontario. He says it is the easiest thing in the world for them to do.

**An hon. Member:** That is done to extend the life of the mine.

**Mr. Fisher:** I do not quarrel with that. I do not blame them for determining their ore grade. However, we should check to see that they are not low grading in the sense we mean. After all, when \$131 million are being paid out of the public pocket we have every right to be suspicious. The editorial continues:

Here's another example of the Fisher method of the false innuendo. Again, he tries to shift responsibility by saying, "the point was brought up by some people who correspond with me".

I took the case of one person who corresponded with me to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Fulton) and the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys (Mr. Comtois) will recall that I took up the case presented in another letter with his department. It related to this