

Interim Supply

they found with which to pay the civil servants. They did this in the short period of a couple of days. On Wednesday, they were making the charge that we were holding up interim supply and denying civil servants their money. It strikes me as rather strange that they found the money Thursday evening, because on Thursday morning they put in a call to the Department of Justice to find out whether it was proper to use this money to pay the civil servants. I can only arrive at one conclusion, namely, that the money was found on Wednesday. The government would not ask on Thursday morning for authority from the Department of Justice to pay out money if it had not become available prior to their asking for such a legal opinion.

I would dearly love to see such quick action by this government to find the \$25 million that on October 5, 1965, they promised would be available to the coal industry. How about some speed in fulfilling that promise? What is the government going to do about that situation? I do not criticize the fact that the minister of mines—I will refer to him as such although I understand the government has added natural resources to his responsibilities—did not go to Nova Scotia on November 3 and make clear the government's policy in this respect. I fully agree that his decision not to go was mutually agreed upon with a delegation that arrived in this city to talk to the government about the delay in carrying out the definite commitment it made on October 5, 1965. This promise has yet to be fulfilled. But prior to November 3—I do not recall the date; it was somewhere around the latter part of October of this year—the minister had already announced his intention to go to Sydney and explain the government's coal policy.

I repeat that his decision not to go was mutually agreed upon. But that week the government were examining the situation. I wish they would examine it with the same speed with which they examined a few other things very recently. Why must the miners and those concerned in the coal industry of Nova Scotia still wait for this assistance to be provided to the industry, when the minister of labour of that time referred to it as a definite commitment with no strings attached? I have already invited the Minister of Transport to come to my office and I will play the tape of the minister's statement in respect of this \$25 million.

There has been no action in this regard. The delegation from the coal industry of Nova

[Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South).]

Scotia met with several members of the cabinet, but there has yet to be any action taken in this respect. How long do we have to wait? Do we have to wait until another election is called so that the Liberals can put out a message at all the polling stations of Cape Breton South to the effect that the Liberal government deserves the vote of the people for what they have done for the Cape Breton miners?

This is what they did in November, 1965; the message was there for all the Liberal poll workers to use. I have said this before, but I say it again, that a poll worker of the Liberal party who made this message available to me said he was more interested in the welfare of the Cape Breton mines and miners than in the welfare of the Liberal party. He is prepared to give me an affidavit that this offer of \$25 million to assist the industry was Liberal strategy, although the then minister of labour made this offer as a definite commitment on the part of the government.

As I say, Mr. Chairman, in 1965 the message to the voters of Cape Breton South was to the effect that the Liberal government deserved their vote this one time for what they had done for the Cape Breton miners and the coal industry. A Liberal will give me an affidavit to this effect. What have they done? What are they doing now? Are they perhaps waiting for another election to be called so they can come to my part of the country and say: We are a little late on our previous promise, but we will give you \$30 million this time? Or will it turn out to be something like the 1919 promise with respect to medicare? Will we have to wait until the mines are completely phased out and the industry goes down the drain?

I am sorry that the minister involved is not in the chamber. In this connection, I will speak of the attitude of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. The minister's remarks reveal a very patronizing attitude on his part. He is a very friendly and affable fellow. He said to the Cape Breton miners, in his own peculiar and very patronizing manner: You know, there isn't a man in Canada with more experience than me in closing mines. Then, he went on to tell the delegation that the minerals and ore bodies of this country are the responsibility of the provinces. Of course, he asked the question, what was provincial policy in this respect? He said, again in his patronizing way: We are not going to argue about who should take the initiative here.

I hope the government would not argue about who should take the initiative in attempting to solve this problem. There is no