

*Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys*

itself introduced an element of uncertainty in the minds of the buyers which induced them to prefer another source of coal, such as Australia. His suggestion was that since the factors which called for the subvention were transportation costs and, of course, costs at the mines themselves, efforts should be made to introduce new efficiency in production and to reduce the cost of transport from the coal mines of Alberta and British Columbia to Port Moody to an extent which would eventually, perhaps, eliminate the necessity of a subvention to compete with Australian supplies. He had no reference at all to the maritimes.

**Mr. MacInnis:** I thank the minister for that reply but it does bring up another question. I might point out here that the Prime Minister did not use the word "if" in the answer he gave to the question asked by the hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria. Now that the minister has taken care of Mr. Whittaker's statement, would he give us the assurance that the statement made by the hon. member for Coast-Capilano will also receive the same treatment from the government?

**Mr. Benidickson:** I have not seen the other statement. I felt that the colleague of the hon. member for Cape Breton South had not read the full text, as I have, of the Canadian Press dispatch with respect to Mr. Whittaker's statement so I should like to see the other statement before I comment on it.

**Mr. Moreau:** Mr. Chairman, I had not intended to speak on these estimates until I heard the comments of the hon. member for Port Arthur in which he advocated virtually the elimination of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys. It seemed to me he suggested that the activities of this department might be put into some other minor portfolio. I should like to make a few comments about that because I have rather the opposite view to that held by the hon. member for Port Arthur.

I should like to see the role of the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys enlarged. Perhaps we are striving toward the same end but are just taking a different road to get there. Maybe the department should be renamed to something like the department of scientific services. I think the department of mines has played a unique role in Canada and perhaps we should take a lesson from the experience we have obtained in the mining field and apply the same principle to other industries in Canada. I refer to the

role of government in providing research facilities for industry.

I noted that the hon. member for Port Arthur lauded the role of the geological survey branch, and certainly this is a very important branch of the department which has played a major role in the development of Canadian mining. As the hon. member for Pontiac-Témiscamingue pointed out, this role is an increasing one and a very important one to our economy. I feel there is a considerable misunderstanding here—and perhaps the hon. member for Port Arthur was quite accurate when he said also a certain amount of nostalgia—in regard to mining prospecting. The so-called prospector is, in my opinion, very much a thing of the past in the mind of the public. We do have people on the fringes of our northern communities who indeed play an important role in mining, but I suggest that they are not really prospectors any more. They are really brokers in real estate who follow up on larger companies or syndicates which are better financed and which make a discovery somewhere. These people then try to grab real estate near some of these finds. Reference was made earlier to the Timmins strike, and I suggest this is a very good case in point. In my opinion, prospecting has changed very much in Canada. Perhaps we lead the world in our approach to mineral exploration, and in this case scientific methods and a very well financed program resulted in the discovery of a very important mineral resource in Canada.

The view of the prospector, the prospector about whom I understood the hon. member to be speaking, who is sent to a prospectors' school for six weeks and financed in a grub-stake sort of way, is that this discovery could never have been made by a prospector, because it was a discovery which was not exposed in any way and could not have been discovered by the old methods used 20 years ago. I am not suggesting for a moment that mines will not be found by the direct visual method ever again, but I do think that in the last 20 years this method has been a diminishing factor in mineral exploration and will continue to become smaller and smaller. The role of a prospector as I see it today—and I include myself in this category—is one of more sophisticated and better technical and scientific support to a program, although I think this sort of program is really beyond the scope of one individual, or even a small group of individuals.

As I have said, I should like to see the Department of Mines and Technical Surveys