

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for Gatineau (Mr. Clermont) on a question of privilege.

Mr. Clermont: Mr. Speaker, I have just learned that members of a certain political party who sit on the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs have handed over their report on interest rates to members of the press gallery.

Mr. Speaker, I have received myself phone calls from certain members of the press gallery who wanted to know what was in the report I intend to table in the House as soon as I receive the French version. I refused to disclose such information because I thought it was my duty to present the report to the House as instructed on June 25 and October 30, 1969.

[English]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

DOMINION COAL BOARD DISSOLUTION ACT

MEASURE TO DISSOLVE

Hon. J. J. Greene (Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources) moved that Bill C-161, to provide for the dissolution of the Dominion Coal Board and for the repeal of the Canadian Coal Equality Act, the Coal Production Assistance Act and the Dominion Coal Board Act, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on National Resources and Public Works.

Mr. R. J. Orange (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources): Mr. Speaker, in introducing this bill, I would like to pay tribute to the excellent work of the Dominion Coal Board over the past 20 years and more. Without their efforts, our coal industry would not now be able to respond quickly to take advantage of the new markets which are developing for this resource.

The Dominion Coal Board not only brought the industry through difficult times, but working along with the mines branch of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, it took the initiative in opening up the Japanese market to Canadian metallurgical coal.

In the development of this important market, the Board arranged for the technical assistance required to make Canadian coal acceptable, in large volumes, to the Japanese metallurgical industry. The Board also pro-

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vided financial assistance, during this market development program, to enable Canadian coal to break into this market and achieve viability. These efforts of the Board have been successful because the coal industry is now in a position to undertake large, long term contracts on a strictly commercial basis and consequently the program of federal aid will terminate in 1970-71. The total value of the long term contracts with Japan is now approximately \$2½ billion. Consequently, the yearly value of coal exports to Japan will rise from the present level of about \$15 million per year to \$125 million in 1970-71 and to \$180 million in 1972-73. By the mid-1970's, the value of coal exports to Japan alone is expected to reach \$250 million per year. This will make coal one of the leading Canadian exports to Japan.

The Dominion Coal Board was established in 1947 on the recommendation of the 1946 Royal Commission on Coal, the Carroll Commission. It replaced the Dominion Fuel Board which had been established in 1922. That body was composed of federal public servants under the chairmanship of the deputy minister of mines. To replace it, the Carroll Commission recommended that "a statutory board be created with a full-time chairman to keep Canada's energy requirements under continuous review and to advise upon and administer transportation subventions."

Since then, however, there have been widespread and fundamental changes in the energy market, largely because of the enormous increase of discovered reserves of oil and gas in western Canada. There has also been, since 1947, an increased utilization of our hydro power potential. More recently nuclear power has started to supply some of our energy needs, although this new source has yet to make any real impact on our total energy picture.

In 1947, when the Dominion Coal Board Act was passed, coal supplied 59.3 per cent of our national energy requirements, so it is not surprising that special steps were taken to safeguard the continuing supply of a fuel so vital to our national needs. However, in 1968 coal supplied only 9.7 per cent of our energy needs, a tremendous drop from 59.3 per cent. Of this total, Canadian mined coal contributed only 3.3 per cent.

Today, then, coal is only one of a number of energy sources, and as I have mentioned, it has become a relatively minor one. Consequently, it no longer seems appropriate to maintain special legislation and a special administrative agency with respect to this one.