

Supply—Mines and Technical Surveys

the hon. gentleman's interest lay; he did not even know that the meeting had already taken place.

It is usual when a member refers to another member who is absent from the chamber to say he is sorry that is the case. But I am going to reverse that procedure and say I am glad the hon. member for Essex East is not in his place today, because I think that with regard to this coal board item the committee has been getting on splendidly without him. Up until a short while ago the hon. member for Essex East was trying to set himself up as a champion of the coal miner. What put a stop to these activities I do not know, unless it was a front page press release which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* a few weeks ago showing that the hon. member was much interested in the stock of the Quebec Natural Gas Company. I suppose he himself realized he could no longer serve two masters.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. MacInnis: Once again we had the opportunity to hear a dissertation from the hon. member who represents Bonavista-Twillingate. Apparently the hon. member for Gloucester has been relegated; he is no longer the official government spokesman on this subject of coal because the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has taken up three times as much time as he has been allowed. I should like to make a few observations with respect to what the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate has said. First, I should like to call attention to something which was said by the hon. member last night as reported at page 5745 of *Hansard*. He said:

I agree with the hon. member in protesting against the conduct of the government and its disrespect of parliament in that regard.

Here he was speaking of the so-called Vissac report. The Vissac report, as I indicated to the committee yesterday, was a report which, according to a letter I received from the then chairman of the coal board, was a report within the confines of the coal board itself. Never at any time was the government aware that this was the product of an arrangement made by the coal board in trying to set down its views on the Rand commission report. I might say that it is more or less a criticism of the Rand report. In the Vissac report there are many criticisms which I myself have made concerning this Rand report. The hon. member representing Bonavista-Twillingate has either misunderstood what I have said or else he is misquoting me when he suggests that the government is in any way associated with the so-called Vissac report. It was supposed to be a confidential document within the confines of the coal

[Mr. MacInnis.]

board. At no time was it supposed to be released outside, and I have a letter to that effect from the chairman of the board. If the report was circulated—and it certainly was circulated according to the information received from union executive officials as early as last November—then, as I indicated yesterday, the members of the executive were sitting on it, not I. If the report could be of benefit to meeting the situation in Nova Scotia, why did the executive not use it to that end?

The hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate indicated a certain date and then stated that coal production had been continuously on the decline since. I take no pride in bringing this to the attention of the committee, but I wish to point out the inconsistency of the hon. member by drawing attention to the fact that coal production in 1960 in Nova Scotia exceeded that of 1959. This in itself is enough to indicate that the hon. member was wrong in his observations with respect to this question. The hon. member was also wrong in applying that observation to New Brunswick where there has been a similar increase. The amount of the increase is not one which justifies continued operation of the coal mines; nevertheless it shows that the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate was wrong once again.

I do not intend to pursue the argument about what Liberal policy was prior to the election of 1957. I would only point out that if the policy was such as the hon. member indicated, he and his supporters should have got together before they went into Nova Scotia and then, possibly, the cabinet minister who was threatened with a ride on the rail out of a certain town in Nova Scotia might have brought himself into line with the suggestions made this afternoon from the other side of the house.

The hon. member took me to task for one of the observations I made yesterday. I asked him if he supported the attitude being taken by the united mine worker's executive officers. He disclaimed any credit and suggested that I myself had never put forward any kind of worth while suggestions. Then he went on to make the very suggestion which I had placed before the government several months ago. It appears under my name on the order paper as of March 20 of this year. Yet not content with claiming I have offered no solution the hon. member goes on to outline the very solution which I put forward with respect to the coal mining areas of Nova Scotia. The hon. member has claimed that I offered no solution, yet he uses the very solution to the problem affecting the coal mines of Nova Scotia, and has left the impression that this is an original idea. He has not said that he did say it originally, nor did