

*Emergency Gold Mining Assistance Act*

than federal by nature. To them the government is the government, regardless of whether it is Queen's park or Ottawa. But that is the reason that I do not feel that this measure, as good as it might be, would necessarily receive the reception that it should receive among the gold miners of the north. I wonder whether there is not some way in which this government may find a more equitable and better method of assisting the gold miners and the gold mining communities in which they live.

Last year, Mr. Chairman, I raised a point in this house recommending that this government set up a committee consisting of representatives from the federal government which are paying the subsidy to the industry; from the provincial government which administers the labour laws, the compensation laws and so forth under which the miners and of course the companies operate; the municipal officials which of all three government levels are the most keenly interested in this problem; representatives from management and representatives from the union. I suggested that that committee, composed of the five interested bodies, should go into all aspects, of not only the good mine but also the problems of the gold mining communities. In the years gone by I am sure this government has had many delegations from the mine operators. They present their side of the case. The unions come down and present their side of the case. The municipalities come down and present their side of the case. I think we all realize that when any delegation go on a mission to Ottawa they present as rosy a picture as they possibly can of their own particular side of the problem. I think that is only natural. Before this government can get a really true picture of the problems and of the measures we can take to solve them I think that a committee of this nature is necessary.

For example, just as a suggestion, I think that half a million dollars or possibly much less spent in building the road from Sault Ste. Marie to Timmins could possibly do far more for the municipality of Timmins than even the \$5 million or \$6 million or \$8 million, whatever the Porcupine share of this subsidy is going to be. That is as far as the municipality itself is concerned, it could open up a tourist industry that at present and for years to come would possibly mean far more than an increase of 25 per cent in the gold subsidy. Maybe this gold subsidy is not the answer at all. Maybe there is some other solution that would be better. Maybe as a federal government we should look at the possibility of assisting with secondary industries that eventually are going to have to take over and supply

[Mr. Martin (Timmins).]

these towns when the gold mines will be expended, as they will be expended some day, whether it is 25 years from now or 100 years from now. The gold mines are an expendable proposition which is not going to last forever, regardless of how much subsidy might be paid.

I am certainly going to support this measure because it is a step in the right direction—at least I hope it is—but I would feel a great deal better if I were sure that it was the best measure this government could introduce. In the circumstances which exist today I am not sure that this is so.

I remember the Minister of Labour expressing himself last fall in connection with this matter and I was very impressed with the attitude he adopted at that time. He seemed to have a firm grasp of the situation, and I hope that he will use his influence in the cabinet ranks with respect to the setting up of this committee in order to ensure a complete picture being provided to this government, upon which it might act. I would like to be assured that, whatever money this government invests in this particular industry, the miners and the communities in which they live will, above all, receive the priority which they deserve.

**Mr. Peters:** I would like to add a word of appreciation to those of the two other members from mining communities who have just spoken in support of this resolution. I would like to point out also that half of the members of this group at one time or another have worked in gold mines, and that three of us represent gold mining communities at this time. Someone has remarked that we must be rich, and if it were back in the days of the depression I would agree with him, but at the present time this is just not the case. This lack of prosperity, I am sure, is one of the reasons why the government has seen fit to offer this increase in assistance to the gold mines.

In moving this increase in and extension of the gold mining assistance legislation the government has perpetuated the original act which was set up for the purpose of solving an emergency problem which developed at the end of the war. The gold mines in years gone by have done a great deal to develop Canada, not only in northern Ontario but in other parts of the country. All areas, in fact, have benefited from the operations of the gold mines. It has been pointed out many times that 200 or 300 factories are necessary in order to produce goods essential for the operation of the gold mining industry, and these factories exist over a great portion of our country. The work created as a result of this industry has greatly assisted in the