

by Canada?" I have forgotten his reply. But he did have a small pilot plant in that big plant I am speaking of, to develop magnesium metal by electricity out of the Dolemite limestone which abounds in that great range running north of Hamilton to Guelph and on to lake Huron. Mr. Keemle said to me, "We could make magnesium metal for a million years for the whole world out of that vast source of supply that we have from Hamilton north to lake Huron."

The hon. member for Melfort said something else:

The minister stated that the company which developed the Pidgeon process had paid for the development of that process itself. I have here the minutes of the privy council, and I find:

"That the company will build the plant at cost and without profit but will be paid the sum of \$41,500 to cover its costs heretofore incurred in the development of the Pidgeon process."

If the Pidgeon process was developed in government time, with government materials, and at the government expense, I do not see why they should be paid anything for it. The report, quoting the minutes, continues:

"Included in the cost (but not in the \$41,500 above-mentioned) will be certain commitments and sums already incurred or paid by the company for the purposes of construction of a magnesium plant, not exceeding however the sum of \$12,000; the benefits of such commitments and expenditures shall be used for the construction of the initial plant."

It appears from this that the company are to be reimbursed for their expenditures in connection with the development of the process.

Then the Minister of Munitions and Supply replied:

I have forgotten the details, but I think that applies to a certain pilot plant which was built to develop the process actually being used in our plant.

That is, in the government plans.

I think we paid for building a full-scale unit,—

That is, the government paid for it.

—using tubes and furnaces of the size we intended to instal in the new plant. The \$41,000 certainly does not cover all costs incurred by the company in developing the process.

I do not want to prolong my remarks. The point I am making is that if that magnesium process, the so-called Pidgeon process, were, developed in our own laboratories on government time and the salaries of the men engaged there were paid by the government, that process, to my way of thinking, belonged to this country. The whole thing has now been disposed of. What did the country get out of it? Little but loss.

Mr. HOWE: It got a lot of magnesium out of it.

[Mr. MacNicol.]

Mr. MacNICOL: I beg the minister's pardon?

Mr. HOWE: It got many, many thousand tons of magnesium out of it.

Mr. MacNICOL: I agree, and I am not wholly opposed to what was finally done with the plant, because I do not believe in the government being in business. If the agreement they made with the people now operating the plant is a provident one, and if the present operators keep it going and give men employment—that is what I am interested in, giving employment to men—we shall have that much out of it, and in time the country will derive some return in taxation, income tax and so forth. At any rate I hope so.

So I come back to where I started. Frankly, I am alarmed at the government going into business on such a wide scale. There seems to be no end to it, from what one sees in this bill and in the other bill which either has been before us or is coming up. As a business man I cannot understand how the minister has allowed himself to be led into this course of action. If this research council, which I am in favour of and whose development I would support as a service to the country and to manufacturing, just as the Ontario research council is doing, can produce something worth while, put it on the market and sell it, someone can be producing for the public welfare through its activities and the country will reap returns much as it does from business in general. While I am not going to oppose the contribution, my position is that which I have taken right along. I believe that private enterprise will do these things far better than a government can do them.

I remember what the minister said before the house rose, and I thank him for saying it. He had been speaking of scientific and other developments by private citizens in Europe who had the time and means to devote to the work, and I asked whether they were on government pay. The minister kindly answered, no. Well, I know that type of man. I think I am one of that type. I have worked many a night, week in and week out, month out and month in, trying to develop processes in the business in which I was engaged. A twenty-four day did not mean anything; I was pursuing something and I wanted to get to the end of it. I am sure the minister has had the same experience. I am certain that during his business life he has often worked all night planning the construction of elevators, in which business he